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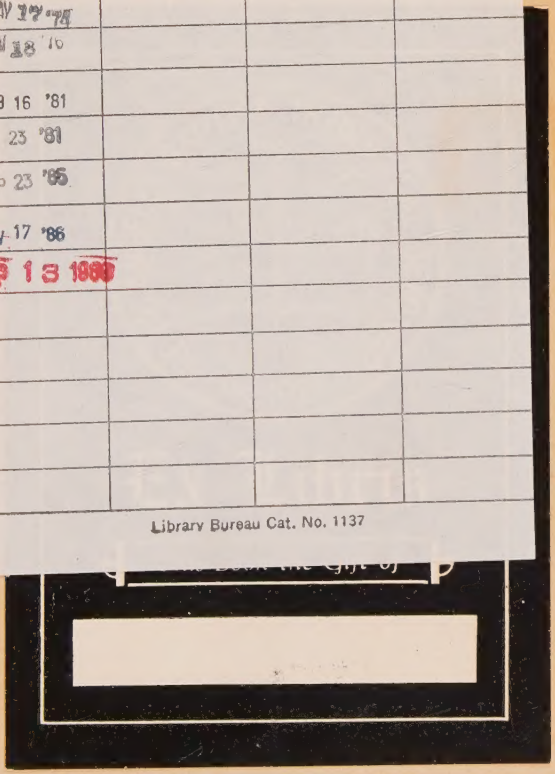

ADAM TO JOSHUA

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THE REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF THE BIBLE

Adam to Joshua

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By
GEORGE MATHESON
D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

VOLUME I

NEW YORK
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PREFACE

By 'The Representative Men of the Bible' I mean the men of the Bible who represent phases of humanity irrespective of place and time; and I consider them only in those incidents in which they *are* thus representative. I offer this volume by way of experimental instalment. I have exhibited but a single row of figures. Should the volume meet with acceptance, I may exhibit a second row contemporaneous with the first; and ultimately, I should like to extend the line into the New Testament. It is this anticipation of future work that explains the omissions in this volume. You may say, Why has *Ishmael* been omitted from your chapter on Abraham, why have Aaron and Balaam been left out of your chapter on Moses? It is because I have desired to give these a place on their own account and have wished to avoid repetition. These studies are not historical, they are not critical; they are an analysis of the Portraits *as we see* them —without any attempt to inquire how or when

they came. I have imagined myself in a studio, looking at the forms as delineated, and simply asking the question, What did the artist mean? Personally, I have no doubt as to the historical basis for the patriarchal life—not to speak of lives further down the stream. But I have been actuated in the meantime by the desire to find ground that is neutral to the two extremes —the Higher Criticism on the one hand and the Old Orthodoxy on the other. That common ground is the fact that the figures are now before us, and that, if there be a Revelation, it is through them, in the last result, that the Revelation must come. Here, for the present, hands may be joined, here, for the time, views may be united; and those who differ as to dates and origins can meet in the recognition of a spiritual beauty. I have sought to give the book a semi-devotional tone by closing each chapter with a short invocation or prayer.

G. M.

EDINBURGH, 1902.

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ADAM TO JOSHUA

THE REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a previous work I attempted a study of the Portrait of Christ, as delineated by the Four Evangelists. I propose to stand once more in the Great Gallery of the Jewish nation and to study for a while those other figures which have made the history of ancient Israel more familiar to the average man than the history of modern England. I would come to the new study as I came to the old. I would leave historical questions in the background. I would not ask what is proved, but what is painted. It matters not to me when the artist lived; it matters not whether the Portrait has been attributed to the real hand; it matters not even, to my present purpose, whether the events delineated on the canvas were reproduced from the actual life. The point is that the Portraits are there, that they speak to us from a far past, and that their voice, which originally was local and national, has in the course of the

years become cosmopolitan and universal. I want to ask, what do they say? When you hear a stir around you, caused by certain words that have escaped your ear, is not that the question you first ask? You do not inquire, who is the speaker? how is he dressed? where does he come from? You inquire, what has he *said* to raise such a commotion? So is it here. We seek the reason for a universal interest. That reason cannot lie in anything historical. It must lie in something which belongs to no special date, no particular town, no single land. To localise it is to weaken it. To associate it with a definite place and time is to lessen its interest for the race. The Biblical critic may insist on knowing the name of Jacob's wrestling angel; but the man in the Gallery is content with the message to the eye, content to see the picture and to receive the blessing.

I intend, then, to study these Portraits, not as historical figures, but as art figures. We will enter into the Gallery and shut the door. We will allow no voices from the outside to distract us. We will bring with us no catalogue containing information regarding the artists. To us there will be but one artist—God Almighty. It is the pencil of *this* Artist that we

will try to trace. We will endeavour to detect, not the evidence of local colouring, not the vestiges of a special culture, not the indications of a life that has passed away, but the element in them which is abiding, permanent, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. It is precisely where these Portraits desert the sphere of history that they are *great*. It is precisely where the environment of the man is dimly seen that the universal element in the Picture shines out most clearly and most resplendently. It is where I lose sight of the manner in which Enoch was translated, in other words, it is where his case ceases to be special, that his figure becomes to me a revelation; for it is then I appropriate his story as something possible for *me*. It is where I lose sight of Elijah's chariot that Elijah's chariot brings a message to my soul, for it is then that I read in *his* experience a thing which can be reproduced in my own. A revelation from God is not a statement of what men *once* did; it is a statement of what men may always do. *There* lies the power of the Bible! It is not the revelation of something which was once revealed to a little band of worshippers; it is a revelation of how God *always* reveals. It is

the special announcement of that which is *not* special—of the *universal* order of God's word and ways to man. It tells not how He spoke *once,* but how He speaks always. It is the proclamation that there is spiritual law in the natural world, and the enumeration of those eternal principles by which that law is enforced and maintained. The men of the Bible Gallery are photographed because they are *universal* men.

But now a question arises. Was Judah the best field for the selection of universal types? Conceding that the selection has been a success, would it not have been more successful still if it had been made from some other sphere? I have often been struck with the observation attributed to the outside world by the writer of the Acts, 'Are not these men Galileans!' It was the early expression of a feeling which has survived to this day—the contempt for provincialism. Galilee was not the metropolis; it was a mere province. Being but a province, it seemed an unlikely sphere for the founding of a universal language. Christianity was attempting to initiate a common speech—a cosmopolitan medium of intercourse. Why try to inaugurate it in the

provinces, where men proverbially resist a uniformity of standard; why not begin with Jerusalem, where people were more likely to think in companies! And what was said of the New Testament had been also said of the Old. What Galilee was to Judah, Judah was to the world—a province. It was outside the fashion of the great capitals. It was regarded as the abode of a peculiar people—a people who had not learned the conventions of society. Other empires moved in masses; Judah was always a divided land. Other empires were subject to a single human will; Judah had ever her individual opinions, and wavered between her prophet, her priest, and her king. Other empires had extinguished private judgment, had enjoined conformity to a common standard; Judah had proclaimed to each separate man that he was personally responsible to the King of kings. Was not Judah, then, less favourable to permanence? Were not her types of mind likely to be more transitory, more evanescent, more perishable? Was not humanity more likely to be permanently revealed in stereotyped forms of fashion, than in the spontaneous outbursts of individual independence?

I answer, No; and in that answer, I have touched the secret of the Bible's appeal to all ages. The things which persist throughout the history of Man are not the characteristics of the race, but the traits of the individual. The element distinctive of any one race, however, long and however extensively it is propagated, can never furnish a type of universal humanity. The men in that race who are representative of the world will be precisely those who have broken over the traces, who have ventured to diverge from the spirit of their time. The men who represent humanity are just those who have stepped over their boundary line and dared to revert to the primitive type of Nature. Search the galleries of the world for an assemblage of representative men, you will find it, not in conformity of individuals to races, but at the point where the man diverges from his race—at the spot where he steps out from the environment of his birth and reveals himself in the attitude of climbing the wall.

The scene for such a selection, then, is always a Galilee—a place where conventionalism is broken. It is a mistake to think that Jesus chose the men of Galilee to show that

the weak things of the world could confound the strong. That is not the principle of God's election to *any* work. When a Saul of Tarsus is chosen to represent humanity, it is not because he is weak, but because he is strong—because he has already within him the promise and the potency of life. Even so were the men of Galilee elected. Their distance from the capital of the world was acceptable, not as a disadvantage, but as a qualification. Jesus was in search of *wild* flowers. He was seeking specimens of *unrestrained* humanity—of humanity uncurbed by conventionalism and unmutilated by artificiality. He was in quest of the spirit of childhood. Why does He place a child in the midst of the disciples? Why does He proclaim that such as *these* were to represent His kingdom? On account of their humility? No, but the opposite—on account of their greatness. It was because childhood reproduces from age to age that which is distinctive of *Man*—that which is neither Greek nor Egyptian nor Roman, but simply human. To the eye of Jesus the essential attributes of Man were the spontaneous instincts of the soul; and He found them in the child. That is why His eye rested first on Galilee. It was

the home of luxuriant human nature. Its men and women were overgrown children, displaying the primitive types of the heart, and therefore revealing that which is eternal in Men. To Him Galilee was the real capital, and all beside were only provinces; for the centre of humanity was to Him the heart of a child, and the key to all success was the spontaneous joy of youth.

In this sense *also* what Galilee was to Judah, Judah was to the world; it was a land of children. It was this that made it a land of promise. Childhood is distinctively the age that sees the *promised* land. It never looks back, even to an Eden; its watchword is 'to-morrow.' But childhood has another characteristic, and it is one more pertinent to the present study. It is the age of variety. I do not think there is any period of human life in which the attributes of Man are revealed in so many different forms. Old age exhibits a general uniformity; the shades of difference are tempered down as we reach the valley of life. *Manhood* exhibits a general uniformity; we strive to adopt the *fashion* of the day when the day of life is in its meridian, and nothing would so distress us as to be told that we did not live as

Rome lives. But childhood sings the Song of Existence to many variations. Childhood reveals human nature in its varieties. In other periods of existence the tune is played on a single instrument. But here it brings in a hundred different forms—from harp, violin, lute, clarion, trumpet, lyre. Here it is shown how unity can exist in diversity—how Man can be changeless amid the mutable, constant amid the flow. Here alone can we look for a representative gallery of universal men—a gallery that shall be more than local, more than national, more than the product of an age and clime—a gallery which shall enfold the one in the many, and include the many in the life of the one.

Now, in the ancient world, in the pre-Christian world, I know of only one such gallery—that which contains the Portraits of the Jewish nation. Nowhere else do we find a gallery representative of man as man. I can find galleries representative of man as Greek, man as Roman, man as philosopher, man as soldier, man as slave—but not elsewhere man as man. And the reason is that no other gallery reaches the *varieties* of human nature. Variety belongs to the life of childhood, and that is

precisely what the *secular* nations of the world have not thought worth painting. They have confined themselves to the age of manhood, and therefore they have entrammelled their pencil. They have been limited to one phase of humanity—often a temporary phase. Let us look into one or two of these galleries of the world popularly called heathen. They are all much larger than that of the Jew; but they are far more easy to scan. When you have seen one form, you have seen all; when you have studied one, you have studied all. You see in each collection but single attitudes of Man—the attitude of the nation which has framed it. Not any group standing alone, not all the groups joined together, would suffice to make the universal type of one human soul.

We enter the *Chinese* Gallery, and survey the portraits. What do we find? An enormous collection of figures—a collection representing a vast empire, but, for that very reason, *not* representing humanity. The empire which these pictures mirror has all through the ages maintained a single attitude—looking *back*. We often speak of the Chinese Empire as in a state of stagnancy; and no doubt the description is true. But it would be a great mistake to

imagine that the stagnancy of the empire has resulted from its want of aspiration. It has never been without aspiration. It would not be too much to say that its unprogressiveness has *come* from its aspiration. There is an aspiration which *retards* progress. If a man is bent upon the worshipping of his ancestors, *that* is a state of aspiration; it is a longing to look back. And just for that reason it is a state of unprogressiveness; if our treasure is in the past, all the instincts of our nature bid us linger near it. Our impulse is, if possible, to retreat; if that is impossible, to stand still. That is the position of the Chinese Empire. Her resistance to progress does not come from the *absence* of an ideal, but from the presence of an ideal. Her heart is in the past, and so her treasure is in the past. She has no impulse to press forward, because she has no motive to press forward. All her flowers have been left behind her. Her Paradise is a Garden of Eden —a garden at the *beginning* of things. The spectacle at which her eye kindles is not one of prospect but one of retrospect. She worships her ancestral dead. The Nebo on which she stands is not a spot from which she beholds a land of promise, but a spot from which she

sees a land of memory. She *does* stand on a Nebo as firmly as ever Moses stood; but unfortunately she stands *longer* than Moses would have stood; she is standing there up to this day. And the reason is that she has no motive for descending. Canaan is not *before* her; it is behind her. Her vision bids her stay —stay near the primitive fountain, stay on the confines of a past world. The men in *this* gallery are all looking back; their eye is on the morning hills.

Let us pass to the Gallery of India, and here we find a new phase of Man. It is a phase equally one-sided, yet entirely different. Here again we see figures in a single attitude; but the attitude of India is not the attitude of China. If I might be allowed to describe the difference epigrammatically, I should say that, while the men of China are looking back, the men of India are looking upward. The Hindu figures have their faces turned toward the sun. Their eye rests neither on the past nor on the future. It cannot be said to rest even on the present. To the men of this gallery all time is a delusion. Everything which we call the real world is to them *un*real; everything which we call unreal is to them reality. Those

objects which engross the Western mind are disregarded by the eye of India. If this were a mere difference of *taste* there would be nothing strange in it. But it is not a difference of taste; it is a difference of judgment. The Englishman and the Hindu are *both* in search of a real world. They are both opposed to the sway of the imagination; they both seek a world of prose as distinguished from a world of poetry. But the strange thing is that what the Englishman calls prose the Hindu calls poetry, what the Englishman calls poetry the Hindu calls prose. To the man of modern London, the prose of life, the reality of life, lies in the streets of the great city with their buying and selling and chaffering. To the man of ancient India, all such spectacles are scenes of fancy, of imagination, of poetic dreaming. To him the only prose realities are the things *not* seen, the things transcendental, the things above. Such a gallery could never enfold the world's representative men. It expresses only one attitude—an attitude elsewhere rarely found—the face upturned to the height, and the hand outstretched to grasp the mist upon the mountains.

Look next at the Gallery of Greece. It de-

picts a phase of humanity distinct from either China or India. Yet equally with them it depicts but one phase. If the Chinaman looks back, if the Indian looks upward, I should describe the Greek as looking on-a-level. He aspires in everything to the *middle* course. He is 'moderate in all things.' The virtues he follows are the sober virtues—prudence, temperance, fortitude. He aims at the qualities that hold an even balance between extremes. He prefers friendship to love; it is the middle term between the heat and the coldness of the heart. He would rather be a citizen than the member of a nation, for the city is the middle point between the unit and the multitude. He neither creeps nor flies; he walks; his ideal is 'the golden mean.' But by this very fact the possibility of a universal gallery is excluded. Variety belongs to the spirit of the child just because the spirit of the child is *opposed* to the golden mean. Childhood has no half-measures; it is either on the hill or in the vale. The mind which has always moved on the plain will never represent united Man, even though it be the mind of a national hero. Plato was a greater man than David; but David is a more representative man than Plato. Take

away Plato's works and his figure is a shadow; take away David's Psalms, as the critics do, and his form remains undimmed. Whence this difference? It is because the figure of Plato moves on the plain—that plain which favours philosophy but impairs biography, while the form of David passes from valley to height and so connects the extremes of universal Man.

There is one more gallery at which we may look; it is that of the Roman. Geographically speaking, it *is* a universal gallery; Rome claimed to be mistress of the world. Yet this gallery proves how little geographical distribution has to do with representation. Physically, Rome is the capital of the earth; mentally, she is only one of the provinces. She is as provincial as either China or India or Greece. She too presents only one side of Man, a single human attitude. It is a different attitude from all the foregoing ones. Let me again express myself epigrammatically. If the men in the Chinese Gallery are looking back, if the men in the Indian Gallery are looking upward, if the men in the Greek Gallery are looking on-a-level, I would say that the men in the Roman Gallery are looking down. They are looking

down at their own burden—not at the burden of others. They have not reached the stage which Goethe calls Man's reverence for things beneath him; theirs is the gaze not of attraction but of repulsion. Lord Byron speaks of death as the doom Man 'dreads yet dwells upon.' Such is the Roman's attitude to the burdens of life. He loathes them, but for that very reason he cannot take his eyes from them. His whole life is a preparation to meet them. His education, his training, his discipline, is *designed* to meet them. He is taught to keep his eyes on the ground where his burden lies, knowing that one day he will have to lift it and bear it. For that hour of lifting and bearing he schools himself. He hardens his heart to impressions. He suppresses feeling. He restrains emotion. He cultivates coldness. He lops from his tree of life the branches which luxuriate. He curbs enthusiasm; he moderates affection; he clothes his mind in the mantle of the Stoic; he practises the presence of calamity.

All these galleries reveal but the *accidental* features of Man. They are not galleries of human nature itself. They are in want of variety; and they are in want of variety because they

are in want of the spirit of childhood. But I am now coming into a gallery which, smaller than all the others in extent, has yet embraced within its compass every side of the human soul; I mean the Gallery of the Land of Judah. Gathered within a narrow space, exhibited to a tiny number, unappreciated by most of those around them, the Portraits of this Gallery are none the less a miniature of Man. They are a delineation of the desires and intents of the heart throughout the wide world. They are no local mirror, no reflection of a special place or time. They exhibit not the national but the universal. We forget that the men were Jews. We forget their vicinity to Mount Zion and the Jordan and the Temple. We forget even their environment by Asia. We find that they have kept pace with Europe. Our shifting western scenery has not made them an anachronism. They are abreast of our varieties. They reveal human nature not only in its eternal sameness but in its eternal variations. And why? Because they are all portraits of youth—the age of spontaneity. Is not this the very ground of national greatness assigned by one of Israel's poets? Speaking of the Messiah's glory he says, 'Thy peo-

ple shall be willing in the day of Thy power; from the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of Thy youth'—the refreshing influence of Thy young men. What does he mean but this: 'That which makes this people a representative people is its spontaneity—its willingness, and that which makes it spontaneous is the everlastingness of its spirit of youth. The men of Israel are as fresh as morning dew because they have a child's heart in them. They are a nation of young men—men of the morning. Obedience has not made them slaves; service has not robbed them of their elastic spring; the burden and heat of life's day has not caused them to wax old.'

LEAD me through the Great Gallery, O Lord! On the threshold I wait for *Thee!* Who shall interpret the Gallery *like* Thee! Thou who hast the gift of Eternal Life canst explain to me how Youth could do so much for Man. I ask the powers of Nature why these men are still alive; they cannot tell. But Thou canst, for their secret is Thy secret. Thou Life Eternal, Thou Spirit of Immortal Youth, in Thy light would I tread this Gallery, by Thy

light would I read these Portraits. Go Thou on before me, and I will follow Thee; in Thy light shall I see light. Lead me from face to face, lead me from form to form! Interpret for me the features! Explain to me the attitudes! Show me the shades of expression; reveal to me the colours of the soul! Inspire me to perceive the subtle beauties that are hid from the common eye! Help me to see why the universal man, the Man Christ Jesus, came not from China, not from India, not from Greece, not from Rome, but from Judah! Show me how He was indebted to no foreign soil! Teach me how He wreathed into one garland the dispersed flowers of Israel, and how all their blossoms are reproduced in Him! Then shall I know the artistic plan. Then shall I see whither the Portraits are tending; and the secret of their endurance will appear when I know them to be tints of the Life Eternal.

CHAPTER II

ADAM THE CHILD

I HAVE said that the characteristic of the Jewish Portraits is their derivation from the period of youth. Unlike any other national gallery, the Gallery of Judah has painted her sons by the light of morning. The traits it has selected are the qualities which other nations deem *not* great—the qualities which mark the *early* hours. And this chord is struck at the very beginning. The Portrait on the threshold of the Gallery is that of a child. It has the physical height of a man, but its mental attitude is that of a child. It is a figure representative of all childhood—always, everywhere. It is professedly the first figure not only of the Hebrew race but of the race of Humanity; yet from one point of view it is perhaps the least primitive of all forms. We often speak of the story of Adam as a very childish narrative. So it is; but why? Because it is a description of childhood itself. Childhood is a permanent element

in the human race—as naïve and artless today as it was in the world's dawn. The man who painted Adam *knew* he was painting a child; the simple question is, has he painted a representative child—a child that will stand either for Eden or for London? Has he succeeded in photographing that artlessness of thought, that naïveté of expression, that simplicity of action, which belong to the child normal, the child universal? Has he avoided the mistake of forgetting this artlessness, of ignoring this simplicity? Has he eliminated from life's dawn all ideas which pertain only to the afternoon? Is his Picture, in short, childlike enough to be universal?

Do not imagine the delineation of a child's portrait is an easy thing. It is precisely the work in which most galleries have failed. There have been two extremes to which the human artist has been prone; he has either made too little of the child or he has made too much. The Old Pagan world erred on the first side. It underrated the importance of childhood as a subject for the gallery. To that old world the early years of life were no part of history. They were something to get *through,* something to surmount, something to outgrow.

That the nursery was the making of the *man* did not enter into Pagan calculation. That the most important stage of education is that preceding the reign of the actual schoolmaster was an idea as yet beneath the sea. The disciples of Christ murmured at a child being put in the *middle* of their ring; but the disciples of a Pagan sage would have murmured if a child had been put in their ring at all. To them a child was the antithesis of wisdom, the opposite of philosophy. He was too sensuous for the Platonist, too weak for the Roman, too tiny a thing for the nations that moved in masses. It was only a *corner* of the gallery that the world we call heathen would assign to the figure of the child.

But if ancient Paganism spoiled the portrait of childhood by *under*-colouring, Mediæval Christianity fell into the opposite extreme—it coloured too much. It put into its picture of ideal childhood more than belonged to it. Take its earlier portraits of the Babe of Bethlehem. What is their defect? It is just their transference to a child of the attributes of a man. The artist of that day, the historian of that day, thought he was *magnifying* the childhood of Jesus by making it miraculous. He

surrounded His head with a nimbus. He encircled His cradle with prodigies. He imprinted on His face what was meant to be an expression of glory, but what was really an expression of unnaturalness. He put a sagacious look in the eyes, a far-seeing thoughtfulness in the countenance. He stamped upon every feature the impress of a heavenly wisdom which, if it could only speak, would say wonderful things. It was a delineation intended to honour the childhood of Christ; in reality, it detracted from the swaddling bands of Bethlehem. It was a conception neither æsthetic in art nor reverent in theology. It destroyed that very ideal which it was meant to nourish. It killed the child by letting in the man. It sacrificed the cradle by placing within it, not a babe, but a savant.

I have alluded to these errors with the view of showing that the task undertaken by the writer in Genesis was by no means an easy thing. We speak with much patronage of the simplicity of the culture implied in his narrative. My formula would rather be that the comparative *maturity* of his culture is shown by the simplicity of the portrayal. He has done what neither the Ancient Pagan world

nor the Mediæval Christian world succeeded in doing. He has painted a child—a real child, a type of all childhood. He has given us an absolute and accurate description of the simplicity of a child's thought, of the crudeness of a child's ideas, of the sequence of a child's conceptions. Do you think he could have done this if he himself had not been already standing on the *hill?* Do you imagine that it is in the valley we *see* the valley? No, it is from the mountain. A simple mind cannot describe simplicity. It can no more describe simplicity than a born-blind man can describe darkness or a deaf-mute delineate the effects of silence. No man can see his lower self except by the light of his new morning. The man who declares that his righteousness is as filthy rags is the man who is already clothed in the best robe of his Father's house; for it is by the perfection of the new garment that he learns the dilapidation of the old. He who can paint a genuine child must himself have far ascended the slope of manhood.

This artist, then, has no prentice hand; his is the touch of a master. Nowhere is the touch so masterly as where the record seems most childish, for that is precisely the aspect in

which his Picture is most true to the subject. There is a great difference between a primitive picture and a picture of the primitive. The former will be foolish but not childlike; the latter will be childlike but not foolish. This Portrait of the child Adam is the latter. You ask if it is historical I answer, It has been again and again historical; it has been repeated in your history and in mine. This child is not dead; it lives in the experience of every human soul. It can be verified by the testimony of consciousness. Every step of this Garden Story is your story. The child Adam is your looking-glass—the mirror of your yesterday. Come and look into the glass; come and survey the mirror! You will read there your own biography. It will be a record of childhood no doubt, and, if you will, a childish record; but it will not be the less modern, not the less cosmopolitan, on that account. The record of childhood is never an anachronism. Let it be only sufficiently childlike, only sufficiently simple, and it will always be abreast of every age. The Garden scene has never become obsolete. It is not superannuated by the flight of years, not antiquated by the change of customs, not eclipsed by the growth of later

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things. And the reason is that it is planted in that field of humanity whose products neither grow nor decline—that field of childhood whose fruits spring up spontaneously and abide for ever the same. Let us describe the portrait of this typical child.

Not as an absolute beginning does the child Adam burst upon our view. We are accustomed to figure him so. We think of him as coming into the world with no experience, as bringing upon the scene a mind absolutely vacant and waiting for nature to give it a character. Not thus does the great artist depict this child. He leads upon the stage of time no *vacant* soul, no empty life. He brings a child, but not a child without experience. Adam begins the world with capital. He is the first of his race, yet there is in him a long stream of heredity. Nay, there are two long streams of heredity. The child Adam comes into this world with two worlds already in his breast. He enters life with a double bias—a bias from earth and a bias from heaven. Two elements are in him—not necessarily diverse, but different and capable of conflict—the dust of the ground and the breath of the Father. He does not get his character from the Gar-

den; he gives his character *to* the Garden. He clothes the grounds of Eden in his own attributes—dust and divinity. He looks at the trees and says, 'They are good for food, and they are pleasant to the eyes.' *There* spoke *both* sides of his heredity—his parentage from the earth and his parentage from the breath of God. The one was the cry of the outer man; the other was a voice of the spirit. The one welcomed the Garden as a means of sustenance; the other hailed it as a source of beauty. The one claimed bread, the means of livelihood, the support of the physical life; the other expressed its conviction that Man could not live by bread alone. 'Good for food,' 'pleasant to the eyes'—it was the marriage in one mind, in a child's mind, of the lower and the higher. It was the wedding of the Philistine and the Greek, the union of prose and poetry, the bridal morn of two instincts which few nations have united—the pursuit of utilitarian ends, and the repose in æsthetic pleasures.

Now, why do I say that this is a representative picture? Because in the dawning consciousness of your own infant you will find exactly the same mixture of dust and divinity.

There are two objects which almost simultaneously attract that dawning consciousness —the thing which nourishes and the thing which shines. The child cries for food; it is the voice of the body, the call of the outer life —and it breathes a prayer which is common to the animal and the man. But there is another hunger which has a place in the breast of the infant and which in the man is destined to acquire a quite special significance; it is the hunger of the eye. Pass a shining object before the sight of infancy, and the little hand will be outstretched to grasp it. The impulse which dictates that movement cannot be from the dust—not even though it be shared by the eye of many a feathered songster. Place it where you will, it is the germ of the love of beauty, and, as such, it is *above* the dust. Wherever it is found, it is the breath of the Father. And it is found in the infant. On the very threshold of human existence there is a gate called Beautiful side by side with a gate unadorned. The unadorned gate and the beautiful gate both open together. The one leads to the plain; the other conducts to the mountain. Seen from each, the Tree of Life looks different. From the gate of the plain I see its

fruits; from the gate of the mountain I behold its blossoms. The one gives the view of its uses; the other gives a sight of what merchants cannot buy. Young Adam ever beholds both.

But look again at the development of your child, and you will see how cosmopolitan is this biography of the primeval Adam. I have said that the typical child begins with the search for that which nourishes and the search for that which shines. But there comes a phase later than either—the search for that which magnifies. If the child begins with the hunger of the mouth and the hunger of the eye, it passes by and by into a third form of appetite —the hunger of the hand. The love of possession comes. Adam looks at the tree and cries, 'If I could get up there, I should be as high as God.' There has come to him a new instinct —the instinct of ownership. He wants to have the sense of being the proprietor of the Garden, the joy of being able to say, 'It is mine.' Any other book than the Bible would have made the primal man crouch in abject terror before the new-found majesty of Nature. But with the Bible the primal man is a child—and children are not timid. The characteristic of a child is the wish for mastery, the desire for

superiority. All imitation comes from it, and imitation is the earliest step of human development. Why does a child imitate his playfellow? It is because he sees on the Tree of Life a bit of fruit which he himself has not got, an experience which he has not appropriated. It is a grand stroke in the painter of the first man that at any cost he feels bound to make him an imitator. When he has painted him as the occupant of a solitary garden where there is none but himself and God Almighty, he boldly makes him take the Almighty as his model, and expresses the child's inveterate love of possession by causing him to look at the topmost branch and say, 'If I reach that, I shall be like God.'

Let us pursue the development. We have seen three phases of the child Adam—phases reproduced from Paradise to Paris, from Eden to England—the sense of want, the sense of beauty, and the sense of possession. As yet there is a phase which we have *not* seen—the sense of sin. The reason I take to be that possession must precede transgression. What is transgression? It literally means the stepping over into another's ground. I cannot do that until I have reached the idea of a boundary—

of a disputed boundary. Very finely, to my mind, is this thought sketched by the great artist in Genesis. The child Adam has stretched his hand towards the trees of the Garden and said, 'They are mine.' Through the cool air a voice comes, 'They are not *all* yours; it is a divided ownership.' With that voice came the first possibility of actual transgression—of stepping into another's field. That other was here the Creator; there was no rival *child* to say, 'This part belongs to me'; therefore the Almighty said it. The first thing prohibited was trespassing on the *Divine* field—for the simple reason that there was no rival human field. The earliest moral appeal was an appeal to human justice—that is the grand feature of the Picture. It is an appeal to the child to be just to his Creator. No artistic conception was ever more original. It is not a demand for reverence, a demand for homage, a demand for sacrifice; it is a demand for bare justice. 'We parted this field between us, you and I; let us keep to our contract! I gave you one side of the Garden; I retained the other. You had the Tree of Life; I had the Tree of Knowledge. Why should you break over the prescribed limits! Is it not enough to have

dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and the cattle of the meadow; why should you claim an empire in the realm of the unseen!'

I have emphasised this point because I think it is the one point where the Picture has been misunderstood. The common view is that the artist is describing a case of mere disobedience. I do not think that is the deepest idea of the Picture. I hold that the primitive narration has attached itself, not to the portrayal of obedience, but to the portrayal of justice. It is not a question of resistance to Divine authority; it is a question of interference with Divine possession. God, for the moment, has, in the view of the artist, ceased to be a sovereign; He has become the co-partner in an estate by reason of His own contract. He has divided His inheritance with the child Adam; He has apportioned the limits within which each shall rule. But the child Adam is restive under the contract. He would fain be *un*contracted, he would fain be free. He is offended by the *limit* to his sway. He objects to a partition wall between the two rows of trees. He is bent on trespassing, on claiming

the whole Garden for himself. The law which he seeks to violate is not a law of authority; it is a law of justice, of equity, of the relation of *meum* and *tuum*. That is, in my view, the meaning of this old Picture. Milton has told us that the secret of Paradise lost was 'Man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree.' I do not think that is the secret which the painter had in his mind. To him the central thought was not the violation of authority, but the violation of justice. It is not the dependant forgetting the respect to his master; it is the partner ignoring his contract, the associate breaking his bond, the sharer of dual rights attempting to encroach upon the rights of the other.

Now, I appeal to you who have studied the life of the nursery, if this is not the real beginning of the moral training of every child. You cannot teach your child morality by teaching it obedience. Obedience is in itself neither good nor bad—may be *either* good or bad; it depends upon whom we obey. Nor is the quality which you desire for your child that of absolute obedience. There is not a mother in the land who does not long for the day when the actions of her child shall cease

to be dictated by her own will. The dearest moment to the heart of a parent is the moment of a child's spontaneity—the day when it anticipates the ordinary command and does the deed of its own accord. What *is* the joy of that moment to the parental heart? It is the recognition that the reign of absolute obedience is past and that the reign of volition has begun. It is the perception that the child has ceased to be a subordinate and has become an equal—animated by the same motive, inspired by the same will. I have been greatly struck by the traces of this parental instinct even in the *earliest* delineation. When I am told that 'the Lord God brought every beast of the field to Adam to see what he would call them,' what does that mean? What else than this, that obedience is not enough for the heart of a father! Why does not the artist paint the Divine Father as *dictating* to the child the names of the creatures? Because he knows human nature, Divine nature, better than that. He knows that the sweetest music to any parent is the voice of the child's co-operation, and that the summer of a father's love is perfected in the hour when the relation of authority is superseded by the sympathy of communion.

Obedience, then, is not the beginning of a child's morality. What *is* the beginning? I say it is justice, the inculcation of fairplay. Whether in the garden or in the playground, it is the primary moral lesson of youth. The difference between his and yours is the first thing which your child should know. Let him see the limits of his own Eden. Put him in a garden where there is a divided possession. Tell him to make an impartial division of the trees. Insist that he shall share the fruits with his playmate or brother. Impress him with the injustice of trespassing, transgressing, overstepping his own property. Never prohibit for the sake of prohibition. If you want to forbid the use of any tree, let it be for the reason that the tree belongs to another. Prohibition in itself is not helpful to the child any more than the maiming of a wing is helpful to the bird. But justice is helpful. Justice is *worth* the maiming of a wing. Justice *sanctifies* prohibition. To teach your child justice, the shutting of one door upon its liberty is a small price to pay. The forbidden fruit becomes then the fruit of *knowledge*.

This is my philosophy of the Garden of

Eden, and I am convinced it was the philosophy of the artist. The temptation of young Adam is the temptation to his justice; the fall of young Adam is his fall from the *height* of justice. With the theology that has circled round the Picture I have here no concern. I will only say that a fall from the height of justice is the most contagious fall which can be conceived. If the sin of the first man lay in the breach of a contract which he believed to be binding, I can understand why the spirit of his dead should have been propagated from age to age. I cannot understand why an act of *disobedience* should have been propagated, for the simple reason that it *is* an act. Deeds, as such, are not transmittable; my blood *alone* can flow into the heart of my descendants. The emotions of the hour are not transmittable; they would require to be transmitted for many hours through many generations. But injustice is not a deed, not an emotion; it is a full-fledged spirit. It is as full-fledged after a single deed as after years of unrighteousness. An act of injustice is never the beginning of a process; it is always a culmination, an acme, a climax. An act of disobedience *is* a beginning, a first step. But an act of injustice only

comes when the spirit of injustice is full grown. It presupposes a long train of dishonest thoughts. The most dangerous looks which Adam cast on the coveted tree were not the looks of the eye; they were the glances of the heart. Our coveted trees are never so tempting as when they are seen in imagination; it is there the fruit looks luscious, it is there the branches seem splendid. The actual climbing of this tree was to young Adam a moral bagatelle. He had been up, in fancy, a hundred times. He had robbed the orchard where the law could not reach him—in his heart. The serpent which tempted him was *within;* he had yielded before he *touched* the tree. His real fall was dishonesty of *thought.* The moment he considered the chances of detection, he had already fallen ill—ill with a thoroughly contagious disease, with a malady full-grown. This child, like every after child, has his tragedy inside, his dramatic personages inside, his dialogues inside. I do not think the tragedy would be less complete if the outward deed had been omitted; for the final act of injustice, in the sight of heaven, is ever consummated in the region of the soul.

LORD, let me not forget *Thy* share in life's garden! Let me remember to make all its fruits 'fruits of the spirit'! Let me not ask only if the tree is good for food, or pleasant to the eyes, or a source of human dignity; let me inquire also if it can minister to Love! If I forget that, I am not just to *Thee;* I am stealing *Thy* part of the fruit. Thou hast not denied to me the *human* side of the garden. Thou hast allowed me to seek the food; Thou hast permitted me to see the beauty; Thou hast authorised me to feel the dignity. But is there to be no share for *Thee*—for Love! Am I never to ask how this fruit shall pass from my hand into another hand! Am I never to ponder how I shall send it down the ages! Am I never to inquire whether it can gladden parched lips or cheer the couch of an invalid! If not, I am stealing the fruit from *Thee.* I say the tree is pleasant to my sight; it is well; Thou wouldst not have it otherwise. But am I never to consider the lane and alley! Am I never to ask whether the green leaf can be brought to weary eyes, to hearts that are strangers to the leisure hour! If not, I am stealing the leaf from *Thee,* robbing the orchard on the side of Love. Make me just to *Thy* vineyard, O

Lord! Shall all my prayers be for Eshcol! Shall I have no palms for Elim! Shall I have no tree for the waters of Marah! Shall I have no manna for my brother's desert! Shall I have no leaves whose mission is the healing of the nations! Then Eden *itself* to me will be Paradise lost.

CHAPTER III

ABEL THE UNDEVELOPED

THE second figure in the group of the Great Gallery is Abel. One of the spectators in that Gallery, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has distinctly declared him to have been among the world's representative men. 'By faith he being dead yet speaketh.' The idea is clearly that of timelessness. It is suggested that the man has not become an anachronism, that at the time when this spectator lived his voice was quite a modern voice. It had not become superannuated. He had personified something which did not pertain to any special age, something which was cosmopolitan and therefore everlasting. Other things had 'waxed old' and were 'ready to vanish away.' Much in the past was but a 'shadow,' and had shared the evanescence of a shadow. But the portrait of this man revealed a quality which was vital to humanity, whether Jewish or Pagan or Christian. It had

revealed something which belonged, not to any particular form of worship, but to worship itself—to the religious instinct in all its forms of life and in all its stages of progress. By that cosmopolitan quality Abel was kept alive—alive amid the changing environment, alive amid the traces of the dead; he has a present voice, he yet speaketh.

What *is* this quality of which Abel is the inaugurator, and by whose inauguration he lives? The spectator I have quoted says it is 'faith,' and he defines faith to be 'the evidence of things not seen.' It is belief which is in advance of experience. To say that a man 'died in faith' is, with the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, equivalent to saying that the man's experience was arrested before it reached its full development.[1] When Abel is called the first man of faith, it is implied that he died too soon for realisation, that he did not live to see the fulfilment of his plans, that his sun went down while it was yet noon. Abel, in short, is the type of the undeveloped. If the figure of Adam represents the child, the figure

[1] Though the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies the phrase to the whole Gallery, Abel's early death is evidently to him a case of *special* immaturity.

of Abel represents the man arrested in his youth. He stands for the life interrupted, the life cut short. He is the unfinished building, the incomplete work, the fragment of an unrealised whole. We feel, in looking at him, what we feel in reading the beginning of a book which its author has not lived to finish—a sense of what might have been, of possible work not done. His very name expresses the thought of evanescence; it signifies 'breath,' 'vapour,' 'vanity.' He has come down to us as the type of the unsurviving class, of the unfit class, of the invalid class. He is the forerunner of those who physically are driven to the wall.

The startling thing is that the Bible should have put such a form on its canvas. No other gallery would have done that. On every other canvas the forms inscribed are the forms of the physical survivor. Here the type selected is that of the class outstripped in the outward race. And the most remarkable thing is that the Bible Gallery has made this choice not unconsciously, but deliberately. Abel's is not an accidental portrait; it is the result of a preference. He gets a more prominent place in the Gallery than his elder brother. For he

has an elder brother, a brother who, in addition to his seniority, is in every respect more suited to his age. If Abel is physically weak, Cain is physically strong. If Abel seems behind in his earthly work, Cain appears to be in advance with his. 'I have gotten a man from the Lord,' cries his mother while yet he was a child. From the world's point of view Cain was a precocious child, suggesting that the man had already begun. As his form stands before us we feel that he is exactly the man who in his own day was fitted to win. And in his own day he does win. Abel has no chance with him. He monopolises by main force. He utilises for his own advantage all the gifts of life. He builds a city. He founds a dynasty. He inaugurates a civilisation. He becomes the progenitor of those who forge weapons of war. His name is caught up by the earliest poetry; his deeds are sung to the primitive music. He belongs to the world's physical side, and therefore he is distinctively the prominent man of his time.

Yet he is not the prominent man in the Gallery. The artist of later days has hung his Portrait high. The place he had among his contemporaries is refused him by the Great

Academy; it is assigned to his unobtrusive brother. In the light of posterity Abel is the commanding figure. It is the lowest hung of the two Portraits. And it is so for the reason that it is deemed more modern than that of Cain, 'He being dead yet speaketh.' From an earthly point of view, his life was short, his work interrupted, his mission a failure. From the Divine side, his life was long, his work continuous, his mission a grand success. He is the representative of all the great who die young. The Picture is meant to declare that no really great work is ever interrupted. The voice of Abel's blood is described as crying from the ground. It is a fine picture of the permanence of his work. Dead, buried, forgotten by his contemporaries, this man is declared to be speaking from beneath the very soil that had covered him! His life-work, seemingly arrested, is going on underground! As by an unconscious cerebration, it is influencing the years! Unseen, unnoted, unreckoned with amid the factors of human progress, it is exerting a force whose silence is equalled by its strength and which is destined one day to flash before the eyes of men!

And indeed it has been so. This under-

ground voice of Abel has been the germ not only of the Hebrew nation, but of the deepest life of humanity. What is that work which peculiarly marks the Jewish nation? It is the elaboration of a system of sacrifice. That system *seemed* to spring spontaneously from the dust. But *did* it? Was the sacrificial life of Israel indeed a sudden thing, a thing unprepared for in the history of the past? No, says the Great Gallery, it had its root in the life of an individual man, a man little known in his day and little seen by his generation, yet sowing below the soil seed that refused to die. His voice was drowned during life; but he spoke after death. He was early compelled to rest from his labours; but his works followed him. His memory completed what he himself had left unfinished. His influence worked underground. His image, cherished at first by only a few hearts, moulded these hearts and spread beyond them. His example created imitators. The leaven permeated the mass. The ideal he had left behind kindled a spark. It first scintillated, then shone, then blazed. It became a candle with Abraham, a lamp with Moses, a fire with the prophets of Judah, until at last it

burst into a conflagration on the summit of the Hill of Calvary.

Such I conceive to be the place given to Abel in the Great Gallery. It is the place of a germ-cell—the germ-cell of that particular spirit of sacrifice which, originally peculiar to the Jewish nation, has ultimately given its law to man as man. Come, then, and let us look at this germ-cell—this thing by which the dead Abel yet speaketh. Let us stand before the Picture and study its simplė features; their simplicity may give us light. There are some who profess to read human history by the hand; I will try to read *this* history by the Picture. By the aid of imagination I will endeavour to weave together those threads of the narrative which are presented loose and scattered. Imagination contributes to reality if it can supply the missing links in fact. My object is to detect, if possible, the meaning which the artist had in view. The rough sketch meant more to him than it does to us. If we can disentangle that meaning, we shall have reached the secret of that idea which has made Abel's Portrait the picture of a representative man.

I have said that the Portrait of the primeval Adam reveals a mixture of dust and divinity.

Here the dust and the divinity again meet us, but they are no longer combined in a single life; they reappear in the two contrasted lives —Cain and Abel. Cain is a child of the dust; Abel is a product of the Divine breath. Cain views the field as a source of food; Abel contemplates it as pleasant to the eyes. Nor alone does the contrast lie in secular things: it distinguishes the religion of the men. Both the brothers are religious, so far as the form of worship is concerned. Both offer a sacrifice to the Lord; both offer an appropriate sacrifice. Each gives the fruit of his own profession. Abel is a shepherd; it is right that his offering should be from the fold. Cain is an agriculturalist; it is well that his gift should be from the soil. *This* side of the contrast is only proper; it grows out of their respective callings. The difference between the dust and the divinity does not lie in the diversity of these men's gifts, but in the diversity of their spirit. The eye of an outward observer could have detected no difference in quality. The writer to the Hebrews says so. He says it was 'by faith' that Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain. What he means is that it was faith that made the betterness. The comparison was not

between gift and gift; it was between soul and soul. It was not grounded on the relative value of the animal and the vegetable; it was based on the fact that the human was better than either—that the surrender of a man's life to God is a more acceptable service than all the produce of the fields or all the cattle of the meadows. The whole point of the narrative lies in the superiority of a *human* offering. Let me try to reproduce what I conceive the thought of the artist to have been in depicting the attitude of these two brothers.

I figure Abel going into the field and thus with himself communing: 'This is indeed a beautiful world! I have heard in my childhood that the footsteps of the Lord God used to be audible in the cool of the day. I do not wonder they were; I only wonder they are not heard still. I am sure the Lord God is walking still; I have faith enough in Him to believe *that*. Why, then, do I not hear Him? The fault must be in *me*. My ear must have become dull to the heavenly movement by listening too much for the sounds of earth. Is is not that I have been growing too selfish? My flocks have been increasing, and so has my joy of possession. I have been so busy in counting

the number of my sheep that I have not heard the sweep of my Father's garment passing by. This ought not to be. If I were to sacrifice something of this selfish life, I wonder if the sound of the footsteps would come back. If I were to select a portion of this treasured wealth of mine and offer it as a gift to God, would there not be a chance that I should hear once more the music which long ago was wont to haunt the dell! I will try. I will attempt to atone to the Lord God for this selfish life. I will sacrifice to Him the best part of my worldly gains. I will remove from my sight, from my hearing, that which curtains eye and ear from Him; and when the door of my heart is opened, it may be that He will reveal the presence which I know is there.'

Cain also goes out into the field; and thinking of his crops, with himself he thus discourses: 'How dependent we all are on wind and weather! It would be a pity if anything happened to spoil the harvest! Would it not be well that I should try to propitiate the great Power that rules the elements! I have heard that to gain God's favour is to gain the world. I have been told that when God was acknowledged as the planter of the trees, man

was made wonderfully happy—that he was placed in a Paradise of fruits and flowers, where rivers clear as crystal traversed lands rich with gold. Was not the prize worth the homage! Would it not repay me to make an offering to the Lord of some produce of my soil! It would be a sacrifice to-day, but it would bring gain to-morrow. It would not only avert calamity, but increase my store. It is a highly profitable thing to save one's soul if thereby he gain the world. I will not murmur to yield this oblation to the Lord God, for I shall get it back, in interest, tenfold.'

The offerings are made, and each brother retires to his home. Time passes; and by and by there happens a strange thing. These brothers meet with opposite destinies. Abel has a splendid year; his flocks are multiplied, his cattle are on a thousand hills. Of course this is not an answer to his sacrifice, nor does he take it as such. He has received the only answer he wanted—an increased sense of God's presence. Yet to the eye of *Cain* it looks as if his brother had been answered by material prosperity. And what about Cain himself? He has experienced another fate than that of Abel. For him the wheel of fortune

has turned the opposite way. The winds of Nature have been adverse; great rains have blighted the produce of the fields; fierce storms have swept the horizon; floods have accompanied the time of ingathering; disease has laid its hand upon the crops; the harvest has been a miserable failure. Cain is filled with indignation. His is the anger of a man defrauded. Had he not invested his money in a bank that promised good interest! Had he not presented a gift to the Lord God with a view to achieving worldly success! Was this fair treatment from the Lord God! Was he to get no equivalent for his sacrifice! Had he not given up the best fruits of his last year's harvest! Would a man do that for nothing! If he served God, was he not entitled to a service *from* God! Was it right that a man who had been so liberal with his means should be rewarded with blight and mildew! Did he not well to be angry!

The artist, in Genesis, declares that Cain was under an error of judgment. Have you ever considered the fine expostulation which he puts into the mouth of the Lord God, 'Why art thou wrathful, and why is thy countenance fallen; if thou doest well, shall thy counte-

nance not be *uplifted!*' What is the meaning of these words? I understand them to mean this: 'Cain, you are mistaking the terms of your own investment. You expected to receive interest for your sacrifice. You were right; true sacrifice always brings its interest. But what *is* the interest of true sacrifice? Is it houses and servants and lands; is it flocks and herds; is it fruits and trees? No; it is the uplifting of the countenance. There is only one sign of the acceptance of a sacrifice; it is the inward joy of the offerer. Not the clearing of clouds from the sky—even though they *be* cleared—is the mark of My favour; not the presence of clouds in the sky—even though they *be* present—is the mark of My distance. The test of My nearness to your brother is not the riches of his pastures; the test of my absence from you is not the scantiness of your crops. The interest to be reaped from sacrifice is not the bright sky, but the bright face; if your countenance is fallen, you may be sure that at the door of your sacrifice there is lurking some secret sin.'

But the narrative says this reasoning is *beyond* Cain. To him the aggravation is not so much his failure as the fact that he has failed where his brother has succeeded. As the first-

born, he can brook no such superiority. How deep is this picture of envy! Could any *tyro* have painted it! Think of the bold paradox of making the first scene of inhumanity arise in the sphere of religion! Think of the mental acumen implied in the discernment that envy is not so much your wish to get a thing as the wish that *I* should *not* get it! Very striking seems to me this latter point. Cain has positively nothing to gain by the suppression of Abel. What would the shepherd's life be to *him!* His line of livelihood lay in another direction. The wealth of Abel would have been useless in his hands. It was no object of *his* ambition to lead the sheep by the green pastures and beside the still waters. What riles him in the sight of his brother's wealth is not the possession, but the prestige. There lies the sharp distinction between envy and covetousness. Covetousness is for things; envy is for persons. Covetousness is the wish to possess; envy is the wish to *dis*possess. Covetousness is your desire to win; envy is your desire that *I* should *lose*. Cain has begun with covetousness; he has developed into envy. His sacrifice has been prompted by avarice; his aversion to his brother has not. He has passed from the

mark of the beast to the *number* of the beast. The mark of the beast is the indulgence of self; the number of the beast is the exclusion of others—it is Number One. The sin of the Garden has become procreative. Adam had been content to say, "All these things shall be mine'; Cain has reached the darker thought, 'They shall at least not be my brother's.'

And now comes the final scene of the Picture. We have seen Abel alone in the field; we have seen Cain alone in the field; we now see both in the field—they 'talk together.' What do they talk about? I can imagine, and I think my imagination expresses the thought in the mind of the artist. I conceive the following dialogue. Cain says, 'You shall make no more offerings to the Lord God; I am the eldest born, and to me belongs the right to sacrifice.' Abel answers, 'I dare not concede the privilege of personal approach to God.' 'A privilege for you *indeed*,' sneers Cain; 'it has added to your sheepfold!' 'Nay,' answers Abel 'I offered sacrifice just to *save* me from holding such things to be privileges of religion; my offering was meant to *wean* me from the fold.' 'Then,' cries the elder brother, 'you were praying against *me*, praying me *down*.

You have been winning the love of the Lord God by the pretence of a disinterested devotion. You have been setting your romance against my reality, and with success. My crops have faded and your flocks have flourished; you have been the thorn to my rose. Desist, I say, from these detrimental prayers! Throw down your domestic altar of self-immolation! Cease to be a barrier to my gains! I will tolerate no current running counter to mine!' Cries Abel: 'I dare not disobey my conscience —not for the love of gold, not for the fear of you. Your sacrifice is a mockery, because it is a merchandise. It deserves nothing *but* the famine; it could reap nothing but the blight. I do not wonder that yours has been this year a barren harvest.' But even while he speaks he reels backward. A blow from his brother's hand has struck him—swift, impetuous, passionate. He staggers, he falls, striking his head in a vital part; he rises no more; he seals his conviction with his blood.

Now, the point of the Picture lies in the fact that this martyrdom was an arrest of development. In the view of the artist, in the view of the early spectator, Abel has not *finished* his work of sacrifice. It is only a *germ-*

cell that has appeared when he is called away. That critic of the Gallery to whom I have already alluded has put it very tersely and very finely. Looking at the Portrait of Christ, he cries, 'We are come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Language could not more clearly express the *incipient* nature of Abel's sacrifice. Why is the blood of Christ declared to be a better offering than the blood of Abel? Because Christ's is 'the blood of sprinkling.' It is not merely shed; it is shed on others, shed *for* others. Abel's is not a 'blood of sprinkling.' It is a beautiful offering, an inward offering, a spiritual offering, but not yet an impersonal offering. It is a sacrifice for the wellbeing of his own soul, but not for the souls of posterity. He desires communion with his God, a sense of personal fellowship with the Author of his being; he has rightly discerned the things that belong to his peace. But he has not discerned the things that belong to the peace of coming Jerusalems. Equally with Cain he would perhaps have said, 'Am I my brother's keeper!' His was a protest in favour of the higher over the lower life; a protest against utilitarian worship, against buying and selling in the

temple of God. But it was his *own* higher life that he vindicated. He broke the box of ointment, but its fragrance did not yet fill the House of Humanity; it was not a gift for the prospective world. He was beyond his times, for his times were the times of Cain; but his march was arrested midway before he was able to attain the times of Jesus.

I THANK Thee, O Lord, that the Great Gallery has enshrined a form which the world thought unfit for survival. I thank Thee that man's judgment has not been the final judgment. I thank Thee that in the many mansions of this Gallery Thou hast prepared a place for what I called failure. Abel would never have been one of *my* representative men; I should have chosen Cain as the 'man from the Lord.' I have no place in *my* philosophy for the bud which has never flowered. I have no niche in *my* gallery for the life that has been only promise. But Thou hast *enshrined* the bud that the storm forbade to flower; Thou hast preserved on the canvas the life of unfulfilled destiny. Thou hast taught me that the dead can speak, that the work need

not end when the life has closed. Thou hast taught me that the influence can outlive the hand that shed it. Thou hast taught me that much of this world's work is done by the departed—that we live by the afterglow of many vanished days. Help me to remember the afterglow! When I see lives interrupted and am tempted to say, 'To what purpose is this waste!' help me to remember the afterglow! Help me to remember that the shed blood cries to *Thee*, that the interrupted life works for Thee! Help me to remember that among the forces of earth there is none more potent than that of those whom we call the dead! So, in the time of depression, when men point to the unfinished glory and say, 'Where is the providence of God!' I will look at the Picture in the Gallery and answer 'He being dead yet speaketh.'

CHAPTER IV

ENOCH THE IMMORTAL

STANDING in the Great Gallery, we have seen that the two first figures of the group bear the impress of youth. The first represents the spirit of childhood—the child of all times and of all places. The second represents the life unfinished, the life that has not seen its meridian sun, and whose work remains a fragment; this also is a morning view. We are now come to the study of a third figure; it is that of Enoch. *Again* we are in the light of the morning, in the atmosphere of youth. I have said that the characteristic of youth is to look forward, that it is distinguished by the absence of retrospect. Enoch is the representative of this morning attitude of life. His eye is on the west —on the glory of the evening sun; only, it is not contemplated as a *setting*. The gates of the eastern Paradise have closed behind him, but he turns not back to look at them. The rivers that issued from Eden are still beside

him, but his gaze is not on these. He has forgotten yesterday, he has become oblivious of to-day; he is straining towards to-morrow.

Enoch is the universal symbol of Man's immortal hope. In the view of that old world, he is the man who escaped the sight of death. Examine your own hope of immortality in your most hopeful moments, and you will find that the experience you seek is the experience of Enoch. In your most vitalised hours your protest is not so much against annihilation as against the existence of death at all. What in such hours you wish to see is not merely a vision of something beyond the grave; it is a transfiguration of the grave itself. What you hope to find is, that death, as we understand it, has proved to be a delusion—that from the inside it has a totally different aspect from that which it presents to the outward eye. It is a very remarkable circumstance and has often struck me as not merely accidental, that the full-fledged hope of Christian Immortality has reproduced the primitive hope expressed in the translation of Enoch. 'He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die,' is the utterance in which Christ's latest Gospel reveals the sense of Immortality. Is it not the

same hope which centred round the personality of Enoch! It is not simply the solace that beyond the valley and the shadow there are mansions of abiding glory. It is the proclamation that for the spirit of Man the valley itself may be exalted and the shadow transfigured into a sunbeam. The watchword of Christianity is the initial word of the Book of Genesis—'Eternal Life'—not 'life restored,' not 'life resuscitated,' but 'life eternal.' There are many watchwords between; but the first is like the last. The initial note of immortality which is struck in the narrative of Enoch is the latest chord which vibrates in the teaching of the Son of Man.

I do not think we have sufficiently grasped the significance of this fact in relation to the hope of the Old Testament. We think of the Portrait of Enoch as a thing which has no national bearing. We think of it as the individual freak of a peculiar artist who tried to paint a future life which his nation did not believe in. On the contrary, I think the narrative of Enoch's translation expresses the earliest conviction of the united Hebrew race. We have become so accustomed to believe in the late development of the Jewish faith in immortal-

ity, that we have come to look upon the narrative of Enoch as an excrescence. I hold, on the contrary, that the latest growth was the thing earliest planted, and that the belief in Eternal Life had its flower in the Gospel just because it had its root in the genesis of the Jewish commonwealth. For, be it observed that this earliest picture of immortality is the picture of Eternal Life. It is not resurrection; it is not even the awakening out of sleep. It is, in the strictest sense, immortality—undyingness. It is the record concerning a man whose animation was never suspended—not for an hour, not for a moment. It is the exhibition of one whose life on earth was so full of God that what we call death took for him the form of transition. That is what the large majority of Christian men and women among us actually hope for—that there may be a life within them whose continuity shall not be broken by the hand of Death. And what has its sublimest consummation in the Christian consciousness had its crude form in the Portrait of Enoch. That Portrait was God's message of universal hope. Every man of the future aspired to be an Enoch. Every man strove to light a torch within his own soul which should not be put

out by the gusts of the dark valley—a torch which should defy the power of the withering blast to extinguish and should forbid the damp of death to quell.

Do you doubt that such was the aspiration of the men who recorded the translation of Enoch. Look, then, at the earliest Pictures in the Gallery. What is their prominent characteristic in relation to the hope of immortality? It is the effort to grasp Eternal Life, here and now. When I survey these Portraits, I can almost see the hand of the artist at work on the elaboration of the idea. I see *one* thought dominating the canvas—the perpetuation of that ideal which is expressed in the translation of Enoch. There is a perpetual attempt to resist the inroads of time, to keep the Portrait ever young. Nay, there is an inversion of the recognised order of life; the progress of each day is made a progress toward the morning. The men of the Pentateuch grow younger with the striking of the hours. Whenever their years are full, the inspired hand hastens to throw a mantle of youth around them. Their fullest blossom is in late autumn; their brightest glow is in old age; their lark's song is at evening time. Abraham's glory only begins

where ordinary life is fading. Jacob becomes for the first time a poet when the shadows of age might well have chilled him. The dreams of Joseph's youth become his certainties in the closing hour. Moses, whose manhood has run through a desert, beholds at the age of a hundred and twenty years a vision which the spirit of youth alone could see—the vision which belongs to an eye undimmed and a natural strength unabated.

Now, what does all this mean? What but this, that the Picture of Enoch is no accident in the Hebrew annals. It is not something which occupies an eccentric position in the Gallery; it is a symbol of the earliest thought of the race which produced it. The idea expressed in the translation of Enoch, so far from being an eccentric idea, is the predominant thought of the Pentateuch and the latest sentiment of the Christian Evangel. The passion for Eternal Life is the first and the last passion of the Hebrew race. To live for ever, to see no corruption, to keep undimmed life's pristine glow—that is the aspiration which feeds on the sight of Enoch, and that is the aspiration which permeates the morning and the evening of the Jewish day. The thought

which kindles that morning and that evening is not the waking from the sleep of death; it is rather the hope that the soul will never sleep; it is the impulse of the spirit of Man to see its Promised Land before death, to meet God face to face in some period of the present world, and to have the life preserved by receiving a breath of the Eternal. The ideal of Enoch's immortality is the spirit which pervades Genesis and the thought which inspires St. John. It illuminates the night of Bethel; it dispels the tears of Bethany. It is the Alpha and the Omega; it marks the beginning and the end.

And now the question occurs, Where lay this early hope of immortality? Each nation's hope of immortality lies in the ideal of that nation; where the heart is, there will the treasure be. The Hindu's hope lay in the mind's power of thinking, the Roman's in the hand's power of acting, the Greek's in the eye's power of seeing. What was the Jew's? A nation should reveal the ground of its hope at the very first, from the very dawn of its history. *Judah* does. Here, on the threshold we have the germ of all her expectations and the secret of all her aspirings. Come and let us

look at this early biographical notice. It is the summary of a life very brief, very uneventful, very prosaic—a life which to the outward eye would have revealed nothing but the commonplace. Whatever glory it has is within. Whatever claim to immortality it has is centred in the soul. The physical side presents nothing romantic, nothing brilliant, nothing which the world calls heroic. Thus briefly runs the record of its days: 'And Enoch lived sixty and five years and begat Methuselah; and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters; and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years; and Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.'

Yet, brief as it is, this record is a biography —the description of a rounded life. Three times the curtain rises and falls. We see first an ordinary man—a life in no way distinguished from his contemporaries—engrossed in family cares and engaged in secular pursuits. At the end of sixty-five years he has done nothing to mark him out from his fellows. Suddenly there comes a change—drastic, complete, revolutionary. Up to the birth of his son

Methuselah he has merely 'lived'; he now begins to 'walk with God.' He makes a mysterious transition—a transition from the vegetative to the vital. How it comes, we know not. The dramas of the Bible are all internal; they are acted in the secret places of the soul. There may or there may not have been an outward catastrophe. There are lives which are transformed from vegetation into vitality by no visible hand; not every Saul of Tarsus needs a physical light to transfigure him. In any case, it is the inward act that the Bible photographs. Very deliberately is this indicated here. The narrative declares that when Enoch began to walk with God it made no change in his outward environment. He had lived sixty-five years as a man of the world occupied with the cares of a household. When he changes mere 'living' into 'walking with God,' he goes over precisely the same ground —he is still occupied with the care of 'sons and daughters.' No outward eye could have detected any difference. Religion is not a change of space; it is a change of spirit. It is not a new road, but a new perception. It finds its earliest glory in retracing the old way. Enoch, in his vegetating days, has gone the

round of certain household duties, has borne certain burdens which as a parent he was bound to bear. When he begins to walk with God he walks on the same path where he had vegetated. He repeats the old duties with a new light in his soul. He bears the old burdens with a new strength in his arm. He meets the old faces with a new love in his heart. He treads again the path which he trod yesterday; but yesterday he walked alone, to-day he walks with God.

And now, for a second time, the curtain falls. And, when it rises again, we have a third and distinctively unique scene. Enoch himself has disappeared; there is no trace of him. But there are traces of all his contemporaries. We are standing in the midst of a vast cemetery. Around us are the graves of a world—that world in which Enoch lived and moved. Inscribed on each tombstone are the names of those who had stood by his side, of those who had preceded him, of those who had followed him. Adam is there—outside the gates of Eden. Abel is there—in the field of his martyrdom and of his glory. Seth is there—in a piece of hallowed ground. Enos is there—and beside his grave is the first place of public

worship. Cainan is there—inheriting the only possession which his race was destined to keep.[1] Methuselah is there—reminding us that, however long, life comes to an end. But Enoch is *not* there. There is no grave for him. There is the place where a grave should have been, and there is a tablet above the spot; but on the tablet are inscribed the words, 'He is not here; he is risen.'

That is the picture of the life of Enoch. What is its message of immortality? Why is this man represented as escaping death? It is on the ground of holiness; it is because he 'walked with God.' Do you think that is an accidental connection of ideas? It is the key-note to all the subsequent teaching both of the Old Testament and of the New—the prelude to all the coming music. 'He walked with God, and God took him,' are words which never cease to echo through every corridor of Bible history. They ring through the Desert; they resound through the Tabernacle; they peal through the Temple; they sing through the Exile; they breathe through the songs of the Restoration; they vibrate through the Sermon on the Mount. From Enoch to Moses,

[1] 'Cainan' *means* 'possession.'

from Moses to David, from David to the Son of David, there is one prevailing note of revelation, and its message is this: The connection between morality and immortality.

If the Jew doubted a future life, it was because he doubted human goodness. It was not the sight of a dead body that made him a sceptic; it was the sight of a dead soul. 'The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die,' was the thought at the very root of his being. That a man without holiness should see the Lord was to him an impossibility. To abide in God's Tabernacle, there was required a man with clean hands and a pure heart, free from life's vanity and uncorrupted by earth's treachery. The problem of the Jew was, 'Who shall dwell in everlasting burning!' and by that he meant, not 'Who shall dwell in the flames of hell!' but 'Who shall dwell in the flames of heaven!'—'Who shall abide with the burning purity of God!' That was with him the one question, the crucial question. Physical difficulties were nowhere; intellectual difficulties were nowhere; his one dread of death was his sense of the soul's unpreparedness for meeting the holiness of God.

That great spectator of the Gallery—the

writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews—has an observation regarding the Portrait of Enoch which to my mind singularly illustrates the point we are considering. He says, 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony—that he pleased God.' For a long time these words conveyed to me an impression of artistic incongruity. The thing which æsthetically jarred on me was the latter clause. It seemed an anti-climax. To say that Enoch was translated to an upper world was a tremendous statement—a statement which lifted the mind at once to the very top of the hill. But to add that previous to this mighty event he had the testimony of having pleased God—was not this a coming *down* from the hill! Was it not like saying, 'The man got a sight of the sun; but before he got a sight of the sun he had a glimpse of the candle'! Surely the getting to heaven was the climax of all blessedness, and rendered superfluous any statement of previous and minor revelations to his soul! So I reasoned; and I reasoned wrongly. For the art was really on the side of the writer to the Hebrews. What I called an anti-climax was in truth a culmination, a completion of

the whole story, a statement without which it would be *not* complete. Let us consider why.

No Jew could have accepted the belief that translation to heaven would *itself* be a boon. Paul says that if the last day of the world were come and those who remained alive were to be caught up without dying, they would have as much need to be changed as those who pass through the valley of the shadow. And is he not right! Is he not right apart from religion altogether—as a mere matter of common sense! If you were told that, by the influence of lightning or some other known or unknown physical agency, one of your friends had been suddenly carried up to the planet Jupiter, would you not feel on his account considerable discomfort? Assuredly; and for this reason, that you had no evidence of your friend having received a previous revelation from that planet. Everything would depend on that previous revelation, on that foregoing 'testimony.' It would not help your peace to know that Jupiter is a grander planet than the Earth, nor even to be told that its inhabitants enjoy a happiness to which the Earth is a stranger. The question for you would be, Was the happiness of Jupiter in congruity

with the *mind* of the Earth? Had there come to your friend, unknown to you and in the silence of the night, intimation of the nature of that world to which he was going, indications of a kindred sympathy, messages that he would not find himself an alien, revealings that there was a place in that planet prepared for him? Nothing but *this* would satisfy the solicitude of your soul.

Now, before you criticise the writer to the Hebrews, remember that the same thought was in *his* mind. He had before him the picture of a man taken up bodily into heaven. He did not feel that this was by itself a boon. He wanted to know something more. Was the man fit for his new environment? Was there a congruity between him and his fresh surroundings? Would he find when transplanted a soil where he could grow? Could flesh and blood see the kingdom of God; could corruption inherit incorruption! Did not translation suggest such a query even more than death did! Death was at least a weeding out of much that corrupts—of the old body and the lusts thereof. But to be lifted into heaven *with* the old body, to be taken up with the faded garment still hanging round him, to be ushered into

the presence of God without losing those elements which had attracted to the earth—this was something which wakened the inquiry, 'Who is sufficient for these things!'

Do you not see now how the statement of Enoch's preliminary message comes as a climax. It supplies the one thing needed to suggest exaltation. It says that Enoch was not transplanted into *foreign* soil. It says that translation was preceded by revelation—that before going out into the new world he had a picture of that world in his mind. It tells us that the beginning of the process was not the approach of earth to heaven; it was the approach of heaven to earth. He did not first go to Eshcol to try the taste of the grapes; he had specimens of the fruit *brought* to him—sent into his desert as a foretaste. And this foretaste was the climax of the glory; it made the glory, when it came, not wholly new. The wholly new cannot be the wholly beautiful. Before I am translated into any scene I must have a testimony concerning that scene. The fields of God may be *absolutely* lovely; but I want them to be relatively lovely—lovely to *me*. To be that, they must speak to my past, to my yesterday, to my remembrance. In so far

as their beauty transcends me, they will be to me *not* beautiful. If they would speak to my heart, they must *remind* me of something.

And I think this keynote of the Jewish message explains a fact which has puzzled all the historians of the land of Israel—her extreme reticence as to the future life. No man can say that this reticence was the result of ignorance. Her youth had been spent in the very soil where the thought of immortality grew luxuriant. Egypt was of all lands that which dreamed most of the life beyond; its whole interest was in a world to come. It was for this it raised its piles of architecture; it was for this it inaugurated its rites of worship; its very manual of religious devotion was entitled 'The Book of the Dead.' From this land of the Eternal Shadows, Judah came; we should have expected her to have shared in these shadows. We should have thought that the religion of Israel would have been a constant call to prepare for a world to come. On the contrary, such a note is conspicuous by its absence. On every experience of *earth* the changes are rung; but there is a silence over Man's futurity. The Jewish Psalmody is the richest of all music; but it lacks a chord which

vibrates in lower harmonies—the message of a world beyond. Why? Do you think it can be accident? No; it must be a designed silence—silence for a reason. And what better reason can there be than the thought whose keynote was struck in the translation of Enoch! The Jew is reticent about the future because with him the solemnity lies in the present. His first meeting with God is not to be on the farther shore; it is demanded here and now. Eternal Life is with him not something which *follows* death; it is something which precedes death. His God is not beyond the grave, and therefore his immortality is not beyond the grave. Immortality without God would be his despair. If he is to go into another world and not be a stranger, he must carry something over from *this* world; and he can carry nothing but God. Therefore his one solemnity is the meeting with God now—under the oak of Mamre or on the hilltop of Moriah. 'Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!' are very solemn words of the Old Covenant; but the contemplated meeting was not in a scene beyond the tomb, but on the earthly side of the Valley of Death.

I TOO need first the vision of Thyself, O Lord! I would not taste of death until I have seen *Thee!* Even were I told that death was but translation, I would not taste it till I had seen *Thee!* No chariot of fire can bear me to glory unless the glory be already in my *heart!* In vain Thy crystal river shall sparkle if I have no eye for beauty! In vain Thy choristers shall sing if I have no ear for music! In vain Thy day shall be nightless if I have no thirst for knowledge! In vain Thy sea shall be stormless if I have no wish for expansion! In vain Thy work shall be painless if I have no mission for my hands! In vain Thy city shall be gateless if there be no love imprisoned in my soul! Not to seek Thee in *heaven* would I come; come and seek *me* on *earth!* I would be translated *before* death; I would taste Thy grapes in my desert. Thy Life is *not* beyond the grave; it is here, it is now. I can reach it without dying; I can breathe it without expiring. I need not the wings of a dove to find it; I require not an angel's flight to lead me to its rest. I have heard men say, 'Death is the gate of Life.' Nay; *Thou* art the gate, and Death is the shady avenue. Not on the other side would I see Thy face unveiled; meet me

on *this* bank of the crystal river! Meet me in the mist and in the rain! Come to me in my cloud! Speak to me in my struggles! Wait for me at the *opening* of the valley! Translate me into Thy presence ere I tread the narrow way! Send me the morning before the evening! Show me heaven ere I die!

CHAPTER V

NOAH THE RENEWER

As we pass to the next figure of the group there is, as it seems to me, a point of development well worthy of attention. In the two preceding figures we have seen the human soul struggling with the defects of its environment. In neither of these cases has the soul really conquered; it has only escaped and flown away. Abel has a higher ideal of sacrifice than Cain; but Cain is stronger than Abel. All that can be done with Abel is to transplant him, to remove him from the evils that are coming on the earth. Enoch is walking on a higher plane than his contemporaries—walking with God. But one man cannot stem the torrent of a nation's iniquity; all that can be done for Enoch is to translate him, to carry him into a purer air where he will have freedom to pursue his walk unmolested. But with the figure of Noah we are brought face to face with a new conception. The old *conditions*

are there, the old struggle is there; but the result is different. Hitherto, the problem has been solved by the translation of the *man;* it is now to be solved by the translation of the world. Hitherto, the only sequel has been the removal of the man from his environment; there is now introduced a new solution—the renewal of the environment to suit the man. For the first time in the Great Gallery, we are confronted with the idea of reform. Noah is not the first to protest, but he is the first to reform. Enoch's walk was a protest, but it did nothing for the *world;* it only saved himself. But with Noah there begins the first of a series of efforts to save the *world*—to translate, not the man, but the earth. That the seed of the woman should be carried into the wilderness where the dragon cannot hurt it, is doubtless a consoling thing; but it would be something more consoling still if the seed of the woman should bruise the *head* of the dragon!

I have said that Noah represents the beginning of such efforts. It is well to emphasise the point. The popular notion is that he represents *nothing*—that he died with the antediluvians. We think of him as having been

the hero of a unique and unparalleled catastrophe, and as therefore outside of our daily experience. No man has suffered so much from the flood as Noah. It has drowned his reputation. It has quenched his fame as a representative man. The flood has infected his memory with the mist of its own antiquity. The more universal we make the deluge, the more local we make Noah—the more do we isolate him from the common experience of mankind. We come to think of him as a man in a miraculous environment—a man whose life-tragedy lay in circumstances that have never occurred since, and will never occur again; and we feel that, whatever may have been his interest to his generation, his influence has perished for posterity.

Now, the truth is that, in so reasoning, we have entirely mistaken the real point of significance in Noah's experience. The tragedy of this man's life is not the flood at all. From any historical point of view, from any artistic point of view, the least interesting feature about him is precisely his sojourn in the ark. His interest for posterity lies in the *building* of the ark, not in the sailing of it. It lies in the fact that he was the first who made an

effort at reform. He was not the first of *dissatisfied* men. Enoch was dissatisfied. But Enoch was content to make his escape from the earth and leave things as they were. Noah was not thus content. He saw things in as bad a light as Enoch did; he deplored them as much as Enoch deplored them. But Enoch's goal was not enough for *him*. At a certain stage of despair, to drop the curtain and be done with the world is a very easy thing; but at no stage is it the highest thing. The highest thing is to refuse to accept the position of the world as final, to insist on remaining within it until its sin is washed away. That is the attitude of Noah. He is the sad spectator of a scene of moral corruption. His heart is heavy with the burden of a degenerate race. Yet he refuses to abandon the rôle of a declaimer. He clings to the hope that when the ship is shattered by the storm, there may be left entire a single plank which shall come forth purified by the waters, and become the nucleus of a new vessel destined for wider and nobler service.

What, then, was this vision of corruption which Noah saw?—that is the first question which lies before us. It is very graphically

and very characteristically answered by the sacred narrative, 'All the imaginations of the thoughts of man's heart were only evil every day.' This is not the description we should have expected. It is characteristic of the Bible, but it is not characteristic of human nature. We should have thought that an ancient narrative wishing to expose the wickedness of a short-lived race would have begun by making a catalogue of its actual crimes. So would any *other* ancient narrative in the world. But the Bible is on the very threshold true to its future self. It strikes here a chord from which it never deviates—the chord of inwardness. With surprising modernness, it refuses to indicate corruption by a catalogue of deeds done. It goes to the root of the matter—to the deeds *not* done, the deeds in the imagination. That is the refrain of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Paul cries to the Philippians, 'Whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report, think of these things!' We expect him to say, '*Do* these things!' But he has simply reproduced the message which was given to primitive humanity, 'Beware of your *ideal!*' There is not a more profound sentiment in all ethical literature. The radical dif-

ference between a good man and a bad man lies in what they *think*. The boundary line between virtue and vice is situated in the imagination. The germ-cell of a man's character is his ideal, his answer to the question, 'What makes life worth living?' So said this early artist. He looks at the streaming crowd and cries, not 'What are they doing!' but 'What are they thinking of!'—'What are they dreaming of!'—'What are they enamoured of!' He does not ask what their hand is touching, but what their eye is seeing. He draws his colours from within. Perhaps the man amongst them who has least violated the law appears to him the most hopeless subject; for the measure of each is determined, not by the height of his deeds, but by the height of his imaginings.

The danger, then, of this age was the danger which besets the young men of every age —an unworthy ideal of glory. What *was,* in the view of this artist, this unworthy ideal of glory? It was the admiration for the Portrait of Cain, the preferring of the physical to the mental. No one can read the early chapters of Genesis without being impressed with the fact that the memory of Cain has become the

world's ideal. The recurrence of his name in the names of his successors would alone bear evidence of this. When we hear one called Cainan, another designated Tubal-Cain, what does that imply? Clearly this, that he was the hero of the people, the man after whose likeness parents moulded their children. But there is higher evidence than that. The memory of Cain has found its way, not only into the names of his successors, but into the literature of the succeeding age. There arose in that age a great poet, a poet the rhythm of whose words has not been drowned by the noise of the deluge. A fragment of his verse has come *over* the flood, and is known to us as 'The Song of the Sword.' It is sung to his two wives, perhaps in accompaniment to one of those musical instruments which had their origin in his family. The striking feature of this fragment is its inspiration by the memory of Cain. Brief as it is, Cain figures there—figures in his violence, takes a heroic place in his very deed of shame. He appears as the successful homicide—the homicide who secures immunity by his very crime, and is protected by that which should have assailed him. The poet has evidently caught fire from

a current enthusiasm—the admiration for brute force successfully exerted and followed by no catastrophe on the person of the delinquent.

Now, when a man's example finds its way into literature, that man has conquered his age; he has won an empire compared to which the power of the monarch grows pale. And if it be a *bad* example, words cannot describe the detriment which an age suffers. When the poets of a nation chant songs of the sword, when they sing in rolling numbers the glories of oppression, when they ring the triumphs of might victorious over right and of tyranny trampling upon truth—it is then that there comes to life, and especially to the life of youth, the greatest danger that can meet a human soul—the danger of mistaking evil for good.

Now, this was the danger of that old world. It had caught the fever of a false enthusiasm. Its disease was a disease of the imagination—an admiration for the thing least admirable. The danger of the Jew has always been an image, graven or ungraven. It has come, not from the object, but from the reflection of the object in his eye. So was it here. 'There were

giants on the earth in those days,' cries the narrator. There was no harm in that, assuredly! But then, he naïvely adds that these giants 'were of old the men of *renown.' There* the harm began! This race, as I understand it, had fixed upon the physical development as the one end in life. They had enthroned in their imagination the men of bodily might, the men of muscle, the men of bone and sinew. They had recognised as the crown of human glory the qualities that could crush, the qualities that could break and bend. They had begun to experience that sentiment which they were to bequeath to their descendants—the offence of the cross. They had come to look upon meekness, mercy, compassion, as unmanly things. Their admiration for crushing strength was beginning to act on the body-politic. It was becoming the woman's motive for choosing a husband—the ground of her sexual selection. Not obscurely is this hinted in the sixth chapter of Genesis. As I read its record, I feel myself in the presence of a shrewd utilitarianism proposing to regulate the marriage-tie on purely prudential principles.

Unfortunately, the course proposed was not

really prudential. The motive of this people was that which afterward found expression in the Tower of Babel—to secure permanence for their race. It had never occurred to them that permanence cannot be secured on a merely physical basis, that to build on such a basis was to build upon the sand. The suggestion of danger came from a voice outside —the *last* voice which was likely to influence the *in*side. There appeared a man who would now be called a street-preacher. The second epistle which bears the name of St. Peter calls him 'a preacher of righteousness.' The expression is significant. It indicates that the mission of Noah was not that of a soothsayer, of a man who cried, 'There is a flood coming on the earth; come into my ark and you will be saved!' No, to read it thus is to read it wrongly. No one can study the Picture without coming to the conclusion that the original aim of Noah was to *avert* the flood. He was not a prophet in any other sense than Jonah was a prophet. He was not magically to foretell the inevitable occurrence of an event. Rather was he to proclaim that its occurrence was *not* inevitable—that it might or might not happen, according to the righteousness of

the community. Let me try to exhibit this point; it has been habitually lost sight of, and by losing sight of it we have reduced the personality of Noah from the height of a teacher to the stature of a magician.

Out from the giants of the antediluvian world, there strides this silent, unobtrusive figure. Silent and unobtrusive he has hitherto been. His name *suggests* this; 'Noah' means 'rest.' Amid the bustle of his age he has been marked out, perhaps stigmatised, as 'the quiet man.' Nobody looked for a reaction through *him*. On the contrary, his contemporaries expected that he would loyally follow in the worldly path of his forefathers. 'He shall comfort us concerning the work of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.' Such was the hope which centred round his life. I understand the words to mean, 'His piety shall *profit* us, his prayers shall bring good harvests.' Yet this is the man who becomes a thorn in the side of that old world! There he stands—a solitary figure over against a multitude! He plants himself suddenly in the highway and raises into shrill accents that voice which hitherto had been silent. The note of his preaching is Reform.

He calls to his countrymen: 'You are in a delusion. You think you are building on the solid earth. I tell you that you are separated by a thin crust from a flood of waters. You and I are in the path of an overwhelming tide, and I do not mean to *stay* there; I must have something to breast the coming waves. Will you not avert their coming! Will you not realise before it is too late that if you crush out mind by matter you have broken the only embankment that restrains the sea! Will you let in a rush of waters that will drown society, engulf order, submerge law, swamp the paths of peace, overwhelm the meek and gentle, bury fathoms deep the aspirations of the heart!'

Such I believe to have been the original message of this earliest of preachers—before even to his own mind, it took concrete form. Even when it did take concrete form, the message of Noah was a moral message. The ark of safety which he proposed to build for the world was at no time the ark of gopher-wood. The ark of gopher-wood was never *meant* for the safety of the world, but, as the writer to the Hebrews says, 'for the saving of his own house'; it was only to be used when

the world *refused* to be saved. The edifice he proposed to build for his countrymen was not a ship to save men from the flood; it was a structure to prevent the flood from coming. He was no clairvoyant looking into the future and beholding an inevitable catastrophe in to-morrow's sky. The danger he saw was *not* in the future; it was in the present. The district was unclean—unclean in its streets, unclean in its houses. He saw that such corruption would involve a plague, and he prepared a hospital in case of that plague. Yet he felt that the real cure was not the devising of the hospital, but the cleansing of the causeway—not the minimising of the pestilence when it came, but the prevention of the pestilence from coming. To read Noah otherwise is to misread him—to misread on the threshold the nature of Bible prophecies. The prophecies of the Bible are never announcements of what *shall* be; they are announcements of what *must* be if things remain as they are. I will not admit a single exception to this. When the prophet cries, 'God will judge Assyria!' —'Egypt shall not escape!'—'Nineveh shall be overthrown!' what does he mean? That if Assyria and Egypt and Nineveh fail to cleanse

their streets, they will get the plague. It is not meant that the plague will come irrespective of the cleansing. Do you doubt this? Take one crowning instance as the proof of all. The fall of Jerusalem was predicted in detail; yet at her eleventh hour a greater than all her prophets said that He would have gathered her children under His wings if, even in this her day of tribulation, she had known the things that belonged to her peace.

Accordingly, the tragedy of every Jewish reformer lies in his hours of waiting—waiting for the spiritual dawn. This is Noah's tragedy—the tragedy of the mother watching the symptoms of the sick child. His eye is not on the coming flood; it is on the ebb and flow of Man's fitful fever. His eagerness is not that his prediction should be fulfilled; it is that it should *not* be fulfilled. His desire is that the limb may not need to be amputated; he waits for signs of amendment. It is for *this* he has to labour so long—not for the completion of the wooden ark. The Divine power which could bring a flood of retribution might well have brought the ark on its bosom. But this preacher had to wait for something which Divine power could *not*

bring, without destroying Man more effectively than by the deluge. He had to wait for something which must be voluntary—a change in the human soul, the dawning of a new day in the heart of the creature. Such a dawn must be free—not forced; it may be prayed for, but it must be waited for. The tragedy of Noah's life is that solitary vigil. He is to my mind the most solitary figure ever painted on the canvas of history—except, perhaps, One. Noah's solitude is solitude in a crowd—and it is all the deeper on that account. We see an eager man in the heart of an eager multitude; but the eagerness of the man is not on the same *ground* as the eagerness of the multitude. The man is bent on the things of the spirit; the multitude is intent on the life of the flesh. There can be no solitude more intense than an experience like this. The *desert* is not so lonely, the pathway of the forest is not so drear. To be the spectator of an unsympathetic crowd is the *climax* of lonesomeness.

If I were asked to photograph the life of Noah in one expression, I would say that its characteristic is solitary waiting. From beginning to end this is its leading feature. As

with the life of Enoch, there are three risings and fallings of the curtain. We first see the man in the midst of the world, lifting a solitary protest against the life of that world. It is the lonely vigil of a single human soul through the watches of a night lit up by the lamps of revelry and heated by the fires of licence; it is Faith watching and waiting for the dawn. Then the scene changes. The man is lifted *above* the world—almost translated like Enoch. He is floated in the air on a lonely sea—a sea whose waters have covered every rood of land and have buried in their depths that giant strength of which earth was so proud. But even in this vast solitude this human soul is waiting—waiting for an earth renewed, waiting for the green leaf to reappear, waiting for the emergence of the mountain's brow. He is sending forth the raven and the dove as his messengers to bring him tidings of the reappearing land. Then comes the third vision, and it is different from both. The night is gone and the waters are gone. The world has risen baptised from its corruption, but with the weariness of a weaned child. The old life is past, but the new is not yet come. And *there stands Noah*—solitary,

waiting still! For the first time in his vigil he waits under a rainbow. The new life has not come, but hope has dawned. Light is in the *east;* morning is in the air; the breath of spring is pulsating in the ground. Everywhere there is the joy of a *beginning.* Everywhere there is the sense of a fresh start in life. Everywhere there is the proclamation of a second chance for Man—a chance of emancipation from the old heredity, of liberation from the yoke of yesterday, of freedom from the ancestral stain. When the last curtain falls it leaves Noah waiting; but he is waiting under the rainbow.

I THANK Thee, O Lord, that even where corruption has risen into a flood, it has never conquered the world! I thank Thee that one stream of holiness has ever been more powerful than an ocean of iniquity! I thank Thee for that promise made by the rainbow that, however hereditary be the course of sin, it shall never overflood the earth! Often do I marvel at the fulfilment of this promise. I have heard the floods lifting up their voice with a great noise; I have seen the waves of unrighteousness cover the land. I said in my

heart, 'God is conquered; evil has prevailed; faith has been a delusion!' But as I watched and waited, the *deluge* became the delusion; the waves sank, the winds lulled, the waters dried up, and Ararat raised her head to greet the sun! Why is it that, when the waters of sin are so deep and the streams of purity so shallow, the streams have always proved mightier than the waters? It is because holiness is more hereditary than *un*holiness. Thou hast no rainbow of promise for the propagation of evil; it has only the promise of the fourth generation; it gets weaker as it goes. But love, *Thy* love, has the rainbow! Though it were only one spark in a rayless night, though it were only one seed in a barren soil, though it were only one throb in a lifeless pulse—it has the rainbow! There is no *limit* to its power of descending! When I tread it in the dust, it blossoms; when I crucify it, it is crowned; when I bury it, it rises from the dead; when I degrade it, it sits upon a throne; when I depress it, it is exalted; when I clothe it in rags, it assumes white raiment; when I bring it to Calvary, it hails the Easter Morning! I thank Thee, O Father, that no cross can kill Thy Christ; I bless Thee that Thy rainbow-promise is to the flower—not to the flood!

CHAPTER VI

ABRAHAM THE COSMOPOLITAN

THERE is, as it seems to me, a strong analogy between the figures of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. They are all, in a sense, translated men—men who have been lifted above their immediate surroundings and led to anticipate other surroundings. Enoch has dreamed of heaven; Noah has dreamed of a land beyond the sea; Abraham is to dream of a land beyond the years. To this last has been accorded a great distinction. The most mature of all the Gospels declares that he anticipated the Christian Era—'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' In what sense is it meant that Abraham foresaw the day of Christ? Not in the sense of a clairvoyant; that would have been no real revelation of Christ. The only way in which I can foresee the day of another is by living the life of that day. There are days in the heart of winter which may be said to anti-

cipate the summer—days of sunshine, days of warmth, days of calm. So is it in the winter of the moral world. There are hours in which humanity seems to make a leap into other centuries and other scenes. There are men who are before their time. They stand upon a hill and see the other side. They narrowly miss being heralds of the future. They only miss that destiny because their age is not ripe for them. Like Paul, they are 'born out of due time'—born too soon. They have an Easter vision while it is yet winter, and therefore the winter loves them not. They are not looked upon as premature, but as immature—as unripe fruits of the tree of life, whose branches ought to be cut down to prevent disease and death. They are in advance of their age, and therefore they are the victims of their age. They are ever the men of sacrifice.

Such a man is Abraham. He is born too soon. The father of a vast multitude, he is himself a lonely figure—above his surroundings, unappreciated by his age. And why is this? It is because he has conceived an idea to which his age is a stranger—an idea the working out of which *itself* involves sacrifice. We are in a great mistake about the life of

Abraham. We think of it as a brilliant morning followed by a splendid noonday and a stormy night—as an existence whose dawn and whose meridian were marked by personal triumph, but whose evening had to bear the cross. A more untrue description of the artist's thought cannot be conceived. This life is all cross together—morning, noon, and night. It is from beginning to end a life of sacrifice. Mount Moriah is not what we imagine—an unfortunate accident which disturbed his sunshine at the last. No; it is only the dark close of a dark day, the latest step of that long ascent which had begun in Ur of the Chaldees with the climbing of a steep hill.

Let us consider this beginning. A youth in the land of Ur conceives the desire to emigrate. It comes to him in the form of a Divine command—in the sense of a destiny, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' Now, the popular view is that this is the record of a young man's *ambition*. We

figure Abraham as a youth tired of his mean surroundings, eager to get out from the narrow precincts of a paltry village into the life and air of the metropolis—a man wishing to make his fortune and seeking for a wider field of labour. We figure him so, and so figuring him, we make light of his *religion*. We say, 'Who would not obey a Divine command like *that*—a command to better one's self, a command to be prosperous, a command to have purple and fine linen and sumptuous faring every day; would not any man be pious on *these* terms!'

But we have entirely misinterpreted the meaning of the artist. The Picture he seeks to draw is exactly the opposite of that which our mind has sketched. It is not that of a young man striving to be rich; it is that of a youth who in the enthusiasm of a great cause is willing to be poor. It is not the delineation of a life which is impressed with the narrowness of its surroundings and longs for wider room; it is the unselfishness of a life which feels the largeness of its room and pities the narrow surroundings of others. Abraham is not the man of a village seeking a metropolis; he is the man of a metropolis seeking to ex-

tend a village. Ur of the Chaldees was no home in the desert; it was a centre of civilisation, a seat of worldly prosperity. The dream which there burst upon the soul of Abraham was the hope of being a secular missionary, a colonist of waste places. He looked out from a scene of culture upon a scene of surrounding barbarism, or, at least, of surrounding primitiveness. There came to him the thought that his culture was a gift from God—a gift not to retain, but to bestow. Was it not the part of a benefited nation to bless those lands which had not been benefited! If he had a lamp of blessing, it was surely given that he might share it! Had he any right to sit contentedly beside his fire while others were cold! Should he not go out into the cold and teach others how to *make* a fire! Would not his own comfort *burn* him if he monopolised it! Was it not his *duty* to leave his country and his kindred and his father's house—that he might plant the blessings of civilisation in countries and kindreds and houses which were still untouched by its light!

The truth is, I regard the Portrait of Abraham as the earliest attempt to represent a cosmopolitan man—a man seeking to make

the world a recipient of his own blessing. You will go wrong, in my opinion, if you find his antitype in the youth who seeks to aggrandise himself. You will find it rather in him who is eager to *spend* himself—to pour out all the treasures of his life for the good of humanity. He is the forerunner of that great missionary band which, whether in the sphere of religion or of culture have been the pioneers of a new era to lands that were outside the pale —the forerunner of Duff, of Livingstone, of Moffat, of Carey, of Stanley, of Nansen, of Sir John Franklin—of all in every age who have travelled and explored for purposes of human development. Abraham is the man with the cosmopolitan spirit—the man who realises the common rights of the human race and seeks to *secure* them for the race. This will always be his proudest distinction and his highest glory.

And it will also be found to have been the root of his sacrificial life. No man in the days of Abraham could be a cosmopolitan without incurring the command, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house!' To be a cosmopolitan is now a noble thing; it was then a suspected thing.

Man had not learned the rights of human nature. He had not learned that the fact of being a sufferer itself confers the right to be succoured, shielded, comforted. The morality of each nation was national. To be touched with sins and sorrows outside was unpatriotic. Patriotism was the highest virtue; the love of country was the highest love. When a man's inner nature said to him, 'Get thee out of thy country!' and when for the benefit of *other* countries he felt constrained to obey that voice, he was likely to go *alone*. By his act of cosmopolitan sympathy he had divorced himself from *national* sympathy. If the brook insists on widening into an ocean, it will thereby cease to be a brook. No doubt it will make a grand exchange; but an eye untrained to the vast will prefer the narrower precincts and look with regret on the enlargement of the waters. Even so was Abraham regarded. The cosmopolitan impulse that came upon him was an enlargement of spirit; it transformed a brook into a sea. But, for that very reason, it was a curtailment of his sphere among contemporaries. It exposed him to social ostracism. It separated him from his age. It expelled him from current sympathies. It

caused him to be looked upon as a visionary, as a dreamer, as a man unfit for his kind. The path selected by Abraham was a path which the world of his day did *not* deem heroic.

Look now at this phase of Abraham's life in the light of the later saying that he saw the day of the Lord. Is not the initial movement of this man's life precisely the initial movement ascribed to the Messianic course of Jesus! Paul declares that the first thing Jesus did was to 'empty Himself'—to select a path of impoverishment and privation. 'He who was rich, for our sakes became poor,' are the suggestive words in which he emphasises the sacrifice involved in the cosmopolitan path of the Son of Man. From beginning to end the charge against Him was the fact that His mission was more than national; that He deemed the welfare of humanity an object of higher interest than the welfare of His country. Could any period of past history mirror that fact in anticipation more clearly than the experience of Abraham! If you read it as we have read it, as I believe the artist meant it to be read, you will see in it a forecast shadow of the *Gospel* delineation. Here is a man who might have been rich taking a course which

involved his becoming poor. No doubt he is promised large possessions; but these are only promised—they had to be accepted by faith. What had to be accepted as fact was present privation—hardship, weariness, distrust by old friends, coldness from strangers, isolation from the life of all. All this was involved in the cosmopolitan path of Abraham. It was a lonely path, a thorny path, a hitherto untrodden path—a path which was only to be trodden in its fulness when the feet of the Son of Man should overstep the boundaries of nations.

The life of Abraham, then, begins with an experience which, in germ, is identical with that of Jesus. On the threshold of his ministry I am struck, too, by the analogy between the first three trials of Abraham and the three temptations of Jesus. Taking the order of these temptations from the narrative of St. Matthew, they correspond to the order of the trials of Abraham. Of course, it is an undesigned coincidence; it is neither prophecy on the part of Genesis nor reproduction on the part of the Gospel, but it is all the more striking on that account. Look at the experience attributed to Jesus. The tempter comes to

Him and says, 'Command that these stones be made bread'; it is an appeal to the physical nature—the sense of outward want. The scene changes, and there is a new appeal—what I might call an appeal to the imagination. Christ stands on a pinnacle of the temple, and a voice cries, 'Cast thyself down—try to reach your goal by the road of physical power.' Then comes the final trial—the moral conflict of the soul. Before the eye of Jesus there stretch two fields of possible possession—the one rich and luxuriant, the other at present a bleak and desert waste, and between these two He is called to choose. The tempter emphasises the glory of the luxuriant field, 'All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Abraham too, as it seems to me, has these three trials at the outset of his ministry. He is first assailed by famine; the bodily nature is made on the very threshold to protest against the enterprise; it is a temptation to abandon the work. Then comes a temptation, not to abandon, but to accelerate it by an exercise of physical power. It appears in the subtle effort to win the favour of Pharaoh by a worldly policy. Nor does Abraham come

forth scatheless from the trial; he *does* cast himself down from the pinnacle of *his* temple. But the third temptation is destined to redeem him, to wash him white. To him as to the future Messiah, there comes the call to an act of choice between worldly possessions. You will find it in the twelfth chapter of Genesis. Two fields stretch before the eyes of Abraham—the one fertile, the other seemingly barren. His kinsman Lot [1] is in search of the fertile field; he looks upon it with longing gaze as a source of independent empire. He would choose it if he could; but the choice lies not with him; it lies with Abraham. Will Abraham permit it? Will he allow a vassal to get the richer possession? Will he suffer a dependant to receive the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them while he himself is confined to the seemingly barren waste? Remember where Abraham's temptation to the rich kingdom lay. It lay where Christ's lay—not in covetousness but in usefulness. What could the pioneer of civilisation not have done with such a kingdom! Might not the cause of humanity be helped by riches!

[1] This is one of the characters whom I hope to treat independently in a subsequent volume.

Might not the labours of the missionary be aided by the possession of private means! Might not the influence of the new movement be rendered more powerful if it were felt to come, not from the valley, but from the hill!

Does Abraham, then, choose the richer possession? No; he selects the apparently barren one. Why? Because he does not want his followers to become a nation through out-door relief. God was to make of *him* a great nation. The race which he was to develop was to be developed by *self*-culture—not by culture from without. To use his own words, no man was to say, 'I have made Abraham rich.' And so he gave up the mountain for the valley. He went down—down to privation, down to wandering, down to a life without a home, down to days of marching and nights of weariness. And with that selection of the valley there came to him *another* hour of the day of Jesus. When Christ took the lowly path in preference to the high one, 'many of His disciples walked no more with Him.' So is it here. The man enriched by Abraham's own abstinence becomes the attraction. There is an exodus from the vale—an exodus from the camp of Abraham to the camp of Lot. The

prospect of the loaves is too tempting. The chivalry of the master has itself provided the servant with the chance for desertion. Why seek a land in the future when there was a land here and now! Why journey through endless plains when there was a rest at the door! Was not home better than hardship, quiet superior to struggle, abundance preferable to scarcity! It was surely folly to pursue a dream when the waking reality stood before the eyes!

And so, the camp of Abraham was thinned. His humanitarian scheme received a chill—a chill which came from the heat of his own generosity. This was the saddest hour of his life, as I think the corresponding period was the saddest hour in the life of Jesus. Yet, as to the soul of Jesus this hour was the prelude to a great revelation, so to the spirit of Abraham it was the forerunner of a vision of glory; here again was the experience of the missionary to anticipate the Day of the Lord. Abraham too was in the hour of his seeming failure to have a scene of transfiguration. While he stands dejected on the desert waste, there flashes before his sight a wonderful vision. An empire rises to his view—an empire

such as Man had never seen. It stretches to all ends of the earth—north, south, east, west. It embraces all ages of time—it is to endure for ever. It comprehends all varieties of men —its inhabitants are to be as the dust of the earth for multitude. Above all, it is a kingdom whose foundation is to be laid in righteousness—a kingdom bestowed by God, chartered by the will of heaven, 'unto thee will *I* give it.' Such is the vision which in his hour of sadness floats before the eyes of Abraham. From the place where he stood he saw the promised land; and the place where he stood was transfigured. It lost its obscure character; it became a centre, a metropolis, a highway for the nations. He beheld it already glorified—transformed from a field of tents into a city of palaces within whose walls are gathered the worshippers of the living God.

The scene passed, and Abraham descended into common day. He came down into life's rough reality. And the reality was rough indeed. Around him was a growing corruption. The plains of Sodom were a sink of iniquity. They seemed to breathe derision upon his dream of moral glory. Yet, here again, if chronology did not prevent it, we should al-

most persuade ourselves that we heard the coming tread of the Man of Nazareth. We remind ourselves that it is after Christ's vision of transfigured glory that He meets the demoniac on the plain, and that the power of healing lay with the Heart which had *seen* the glory. We hear the question asked by the disciples who had remained below, 'Why could not *we* cast out the demon?' and we feel the answer to be, 'Because *you* did *not* see the glory.' All this passes before us as we stand in front of the Picture of Abraham. This man is strengthened for *Sodom* by the vision of the glory. In sublime accents he lifts up his voice to plead for the doomed land. Almost, for a moment, we should imagine that we heard Christ weeping over Jerusalem! I say 'almost' and 'for a moment.' Do not think that the day of Abraham ever reached beyond the *dawn* of Christ's day. With all its analogies of experience, it was still the analogy between the child and the man. The tears of Abraham over Sodom do not really equal the tears of Jesus over Jerusalem. The pity of Abraham was pity for the righteous; the pity of Jesus was pity for the fallen. Abraham beheld gold amid the clay, and lamented that

the gold should perish *with* the clay; Jesus beheld the clay *without* the gold, and wept because its wealth had never come. Abraham prayed for the ten righteous men who might possibly be left in Sodom; Jesus shed tears of agony over those degenerate thousands who crowded the streets of Jerusalem. The reign of absolute mercy had not yet begun; the Gospel of unconditional grace was still afar off. It was as yet rather charity than love—rather the suspending of judgment than the following of condemnation by forgiveness. Abraham was only in the dawn; but he *was* in the dawn. He had caught a glow of the sunrise—of human possibilities; he had gathered fresh hope for Man. It was for other ages to extend his labours.

And here the cosmopolitan picture shades into another. Have you ever marked the peculiarity in the delineation of this figure of Abraham? The ordinary course of life is to begin in the interior and then spread out toward the sea. But Abraham's life begins by the sea, and then makes its way to the interior. Most of us are individuals first and cosmopolitans afterwards; Abraham is a cosmopolitan at the beginning, and an individual at the end.

His life opens on the pathway of the nations. He feels that he has a mission to the masses. The destiny which floats before him is a *world*-destiny. His first visions are visions on a large scale. He contemplates not men, but kingdoms—not units, but multitudes. His aim is to found an empire—an empire for God and righteousness. His eye is on things which suggest the boundless; he looks at the stars of night and dreams of magnitudes. Such is the *morning;* what of the afternoon? Here all is changed; the broad sea becomes a narrow lake. The man who at the opening of the day has only an eye for multitudes subsides at evening into the family circle. The starry dome is exchanged for the precincts of the tent. The sacrificial character remains; but its sphere is altered. It ceases to be a sacrifice for the *nations;* it becomes a surrender to the hearth. Its range at morning was humanitarian; towards evening it has become a household fire. The life which began with obedience to the mandate, 'Get thee out of thy country!' culminates in a submission of the will to a threatened family bereavement. Into this inland experience our study follows him not. It is an experience which has had special

interest for the *theologian;* to us its only interest is its bearing on the succeeding Portrait. We will leave Abraham where we found him —standing by the humanitarian sea.

I THANK Thee, O Lord, for my glimpses of the coming day! I thank Thee that there are prophetic moments in which I have sight of what *will* be! Why should I *not* have such moments! Hast Thou not given to the swallow the vision of a summer which is yet far away! Hast Thou not given to the bee the vision of many mansions that are to come! And shall my soul have no guide toward *its* morrow; shall my heart have no prophecy of the undawned day; My Father, Thou hast not left me thus comfortless. To me, as to Abraham, there have come intimations of a larger country and premonitions of a wider brotherhood. As I have strayed below the stars, I have asked myself if these *alone* have unity. I have asked if there is no law that can so bind human lives. I have said, 'Is Thy blessing alone for Esau—for rough material things; hast Thou no word for Jacob—no bond of the spirit!' And as I said it, I knew that it was a voice from *Thee,* a prophecy from Thee. I bless Thee for that

prophecy, O my God! Henceforth the stars say to me, 'So shall thy seed be!' Hasten, my Father, this day of Thy Christ! Unite the souls of men as Thou hast united the orbs of heaven! May the bells of union ring across the snow! Ring out the separation of countries and kindreds! Ring out the pride of race and the jealousy of privilege! Ring out the passion for monopoly and the lust for special power! Ring out the wars that sever the cities of the plain! Ring in the bond of brotherhood, the law of love, the harmony of helpfulness, the chord of compassion, the fulness of fellowship, the music of mercy, the chant of charity, the symphony of now silent souls! I *desire* to hear it; and when I hear it I shall be glad.

CHAPTER VII

ISAAC THE DOMESTICATED

SIDE by side with the figure of Abraham stands in the Great Gallery the form of his son Isaac. Yet nothing can exceed the contrast between these figures. One would imagine that they were painted by two artists of different lands. No ancient nation but Israel could have exhibited such variety in its types of heroism. Abraham, spite of his cosmopolitanism, has an element in common with the ideal of the *old* world. He is the type of masculine strength. He represents human activity —man cleaving his way by the sheer manipulation of energy. But Isaac is distinctively a female type. He reveals human nature in a passive attitude — precisely that attitude which the old world did not like. In passing from Abraham to Isaac, we seem to be passing from a mountain torrent to a stagnant pool. We come from the running into the rest, from the hurry into the hush, from the sound

into the silence. Abraham is the father, and Isaac is the son; yet the sphere of the son seems more curtailed than that of the father. We expect generations to be progressive, to branch out as they grow. But here, as the generation grows, it would almost seem as if the original branches were lopped away and the tree of life were diminished. As the two figures stand before us we are tempted to say, 'Abraham is the young man and Isaac the old.' In coming from the father to the son, we have come from the world into the nursery, from the guidance of nations to the care of children. Abraham has the foreign mission; Isaac has the home mission. Abraham has to civilise a world; Isaac has to train a family. Abraham plants colonies; Isaac digs wells. Abraham overawes his opponents; Isaac shrinks from conflict. Abraham treads a political arena and restrains wrong; Isaac walks within his own house and restrains himself.

But, conceding the full force of the contrast, are you sure that it indicates an anticlimax? Admitting that Abraham's sphere is the world and Isaac's the domestic altar, are you *certain* that the latter is the scene of a diminished energy? I am myself quite certain

of the contrary. I feel convinced that service becomes more arduous in proportion as the sphere narrows. I have often been struck with these words of Jesus, 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.' They are not the common measurement. The common measurement is, 'He that is faithful in that which is large, is faithful in that which is small.' On what ground does Christ invert the order? On the ground of deep spiritual insight—insight which experience has confirmed. Many a man has been great in the winter blast and fretted in the presence of the summer shower. Many a man has borne his cross in public with splendid magnanimity and sunk beneath it in the silence of his own room. Many a man in the exchange and in the forum has an admirable command of temper, who yet in the precincts of his home is a bully and a tyrant. Many a man is the soul of chivalry to strangers, and the essence of rudeness to his own sisters or daughters. Why is this? The short and easy answer is that there is hypocrisy in the human race. I do not think that is the explanation. I take the reason to be the principle enunciated by Jesus. The wider sphere may be more prolific in influ-

ence, but the narrow one is richer in sacrifice. It is richer in sacrifice because it is more barren of stimulus. It reveals no cloud of witnesses. It displays no prizes for success. It offers no prospect of outward plaudits. The virtues of the home circle are spontaneous virtues. They have nothing to cultivate them from without; they must grow by their own strength, or not grow at all.

There is a remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews in which it is stated that Jesus 'suffered outside the camp.' I take the idea to be that the trials of a captain are greater when they are unappreciated by the army—when they have to be borne in the silence of his own breast. The life of Isaac is from beginning to end a suffering in private. His was that form of sacrifice which does not show, which wins no reputation for heroism. But just on that account it had a value all its own. The sacrifices of Abraham were on the line of the world's march, and they received the stimulus which comes from being conscious of the world's eye. The sacrifices of Isaac came from the unaided heart. They were the product of an unassisted will. They were the revealing of private sentiments, of

strength exhibited in seclusion. In Isaac we have the impression not of hearing, but of *over*hearing. We seem to be listening to a beautiful singer who imagines himself unheard; and we give him the credit of the imagined solitude. We feel that his singing comes purely from devotion to the music. He is like an artist painting in a desert—painting in the firm belief that none will ever see his work. We bow reverently before the evidence of unconstrained devotion, of unalloyed love for that which is intrinsically fair; and we feel that the absence of witnesses has itself contributed a fresh homage to the worship of truth and beauty.

I think you will find that in the delineations of the Great Bible Gallery each life has one typical incident—one event which in small compass expresses the whole essence of the character. Peter is typified by his sea-walking—his alternate moments of buoyancy and sinking. John is epitomised in his rest on the bosom of Jesus. Paul is summed up in his Adriatic voyage—tossed between the intellectual waves of Asia and Europe. Elijah is typed in his chariot of fire. David is photographed sweeping the strings of the harp—

weaving the discords of Israel into a great and glorious harmony. Abraham has his keynote in the command to leave his country for a larger country—for the citizenship of the world. Isaac *too* has his typical incident, the event which sums up his whole life. What is that? It is the sacrifice of Mount Moriah. As a mere incident it would have little significance; its importance lies in the fact that in one touch of the pencil it portrays the character, the life, the distinctive destiny of the man. Let us consider this.

When the scene of Isaac's life opens, he is a youth. But it is not with the wonted attributes of youth that he is introduced to us. Youth is wont to manifest itself in the effort at independence; Isaac appears before us bound. Our first sight of him is the sight of an unresisting victim on an altar of sacrifice. His father Abraham has bound him there in the belief that heaven had commanded it. But you will miss the point if you imagine that the attitude of Isaac is that of a mere victim. It is that of acquiescence. The light in which he is brought before us is that of filial obedience, not of constrained obedience. He is seen unresistingly submitting to an act because it

is the work of his father. He does not understand the wisdom of the act any more than his father understands it. What he does understand is that he is *obeying* his father. The obedience is with him a voluntary deed, a surrender of *will*. In the deepest sense, Isaac has bound *himself* to the altar. He has submitted to self-effacement for the sake of his family. That submission is, I say, the type of his whole life. He is *always* bound to a domestic altar. From first to last he is offered up in sacrifice to the will of his family. At every turn of life he is forced to give up the public for the private sphere, to exchange the gaze on the ocean for the walk by the stream. He is the forerunner of all domestic drudges, of all who lose promotion through the impediments of home. Isaac is the bird that is prevented from soaring by the requirements of its nest. When he puts out his wings to fly, he finds ever that he is bound fast to a family altar—that identical altar to which early in life's morning he was bound by his father Abraham.

We see a remarkable instance of this in the first revelation which Isaac receives from heaven. It is the revelation to a young man,

but it is very unlike that form of inspiration which we poetically associate with youth. We associate youth with the wings of the morning, with the promise and the power of a majestic flight. We hear God speaking to every young man in his aspiration to *rise,* to break from his narrow limits and soar to higher spheres. So had the voice come to Abraham, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land which I will show thee!' That is the typical revelation to the spirit of youth. But what would you think if your son were to say to you one morning, 'I have been offered a lucrative appointment of commanding influence, but I intend to refuse it; God has revealed to me that my sphere is one of humble service and commonplace duty!' Would you not deem it an incongruous thing that a lad with the world before him and with the possibilities of the world in his view, should voluntarily elect to shut himself in a cellar!

Now, some such want of enterprise seems at first sight to be involved in the revelation claimed by Isaac. There is a famine in the land of Gerar, the humble place of his abode. This is, in other words, to say that it was a

place with no prospect of promotion. The eyes of the young man naturally turned to Egypt. It was a centre, a place of possibilities, a thoroughfare for the nations. The census periodically tells us that our villages are gradually being depopulated by migration into the towns. From a cosmopolitan standpoint, Gerar was a village and Egypt a town. The natural impulse of Isaac was to emigrate, to seek the centre. What prevented him? He said he had a prohibitive revelation. He maintained that the voice of the Lord had come to him with the command, 'Thou shalt not go down into Egypt; dwell in Gerar!' Could he be right in his conclusion! Could such a message come from God! Is it not a breach of religious art to represent it so! Is not the Picture of Abraham more true to the Divine ideal than the Picture of Isaac! Why should a Divine revelation be described as coming for the express purpose of curtailing the energies of a man!

But in asking this we are under the delusion that a curtailed sphere is a curtailed energy. It is not; a service is more arduous in proportion as it is humble. My own opinion is that there is nothing which demands so much religious strength as the sense of a shut gate.

Let us try to put the experience of Isaac in a modern dress; you will find that probably this was also its original dress. Let us say that this young man at the moment when he was about to step into a wider arena was prostrated by sudden illness—an illness which permanently enfeebled his capacities for outward work. Let us say that for an hour he fretted and fumed over the narrowing of his destiny, and cast a longing eye on the Egypt which he could not enter. Let us say that then there came into his mind a thought which breathed an unspeakable calm, 'Is not this sickness the voice of God, is not this door *shut* by God!' I say that to be calmed by such a thought is the greatest triumph religion ever secured. It is easy to hear God's voice commanding you to go *out;* but it needs faith to recognise it when it bids you go in. When Paul hears a voice, 'I will send you far hence to the Gentiles,' he can readily say, 'It is the Lord'; but when Isaac hears a voice, 'Stay at home!' he may well ask, 'Who speaks?' It is a grand thing in Isaac to recognise the Lord's voice in the accident that maimed him. It is a grand thing that he is able to say, 'The altar to which I am bound is *itself* my des-

tiny.' We deem that man godly who can accept a wider field of labour; but I think the man requires more godliness still who can accept as a gift from God the curtailment of a field which he believed to be all his own.

What, then, is this corner to which Isaac is limited? It is the most commonplace work in the world. He has exchanged the firmament for the farmyard. His father Abraham had swept the horizon with the eye of faith and read his destiny in the stars of heaven. The gaze of Isaac is on the ground; his eye rests in pools of water. Read that passage so remarkable in its prosaicness, which occurs in the twenty-sixth chapter of Genesis: 'Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.' Is this the occupation of a hero! It does not seem so. But if you look deeper into this dusty soil, you will find diamonds—the most sparkling diamonds of Isaac's life. Nowhere to my mind does his character shine out so resplendent as in this commonplace passage. We see *again* a man bound to a domestic al-

tar—the altar of filial love. Again he offers himself, as a sacrifice, to his father Abraham. Abraham is dead, but his memory lives, and his memory is potent with Isaac. It is not often that a new generation aims at glorifying the generation that has passed away. We are all apt to have a patronising pity for the wells which our fathers have dug—to feel how much better *our* workmanship would have been. But here is a man on fire with the love of yesterday! His whole aim is to glorify the past—even at his own expense to glorify it. He disclaims originality for his workmanship. He says, 'These wells were made by my father; I have no credit in their construction; I am only restoring the work which he did, and which after his death the Philistines *un*-did.' There is something very grand in the self-effacement implied in the words, 'He called them by the names which his father Abraham had called them.' Plagiarism would have been very easy; by no possibility could it have been detected; the signs of the original hand had been all obliterated. What made Isaac disclaim the authority? It was filial love. He was *still* bound to the altar of his father. Still, in spirit, was he standing upon

Mount Moriah. Still was he offering himself to a parent's service. Still was he surrendering his own life to crown the life that gave him birth. There is no more beautiful episode than the naming of these commonplace wells!

I am not at all sure that this self-effacement on the part of Isaac came from a quiet nature; nor do I think this is the conception of the artist. I think he wants us to contemplate Isaac as a very *strong* man. There are two kinds of self-effacement—very different from each other, but equally implying power. There is a self-effacement which consists in taking *on,* and there is a self-effacement which consists in giving up. The first was that of Abraham. His surrender was not so much a *parting* with possessions as a *sharing* of possessions. If he gave up his country and his kindred, it was for a larger country and a wider kindred. His watchword was not 'abnegation,' but 'sympathetic *appropriation';* he took on him the burdens of others. But Isaac belongs to the second order. His sacrifice takes the form of personal divestiture. It is true he has to give up nothing but his will. Neither on Mount Moriah nor afterwards is he required to divest himself of an actual

garment. His sacrifice is all inward—all of the will. What he gives on Moriah is not his life, but his willingness to surrender it; what he gives in Gerar is not a possession, but his consent to abstain from it. Yet the man who can give his will has given everything. He who can empty himself of his dearest desire has reached the acme of self-abnegation—a height of abnegation to which nothing could add. And there is nothing which could accomplish such a work but energy, the perfection of mental strength. It is a strong thing to lift your brother's burden and put it on your own shoulders; but to lift your own joy and put it away from you, to refuse to stretch out your hand to grasp a coming gain, requires, I think, a nerve stronger still.

A fine instance of this occurs in the waiving of his partiality for his best loved son Esau in favour of the less loved son Jacob. We speak of Abraham offering up his son Isaac; did it ever strike any one that Isaac offered up his son Esau? We almost seem to find the influence of heredity—the two acts are so much alike. In both cases it is a surrender of will; in both it is a surrender to what is believed to be the Divine pleasure. Isaac, like Abraham,

has a son whom he loves. He sends for him to bless him. But it is in the days of his old age, and his eye has become dim. His hands are guided to the head of the wrong man; he gives the blessing to Jacob that was meant for Esau. Immediately, he accepts the accident as the will of God. Though it is dead against his own will, though it is the result of a cruel deception, he receives it as the decree of heaven. With a determined fatalism he crucifies his own desire in obedience to what he deems the counsel of eternity. It is in vain that Esau pleads. His father's *heart* is with him; but his creed is stronger than his heart. That creed is the belief that whatever happens becomes God's will—even though it has been produced by bad agencies. The misguiding of the blind man's hand was a sin; but the touch of that hand was a fact. Being a fact, it had passed into the hands of God. It had become part of the universe. Man could not revoke it; anger could not annul it; regret could not gainsay it—it was henceforth the will of heaven.

Now, the question which I put is this, Did the artist mean this Portrait to be the representative of sentimental weakness? Is it not

clear he meant the reverse! To me the figure of Isaac suggests rather one of Cromwell's Ironsides than one of earth's weaklings. The blood in his veins is akin to that of the Puritans. His was the *surrender* of a will, not the crushing of a will—there is a great difference between these two. The crushing of a will brings vacancy; the surrender of a will is itself an exercise of will-*power*. To my mind there is no more majestic spectacle than that of the old blind man bereft of all the qualities which constitute pagan greatness, yet ruling his clan with authority unbroken. It is one of the finest tributes to the majesty of inward strength which has ever been painted by any literature. It is a tribute to *feminine* strength, bearing strength, passive strength—a tribute which was not to be excelled till the Son of Man built on the Mount His monument to the greatness of a surrendered will, and inscribed on it the words, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!'

And is it not a sense of this feminine type of greatness which has constrained the artist in Genesis to give woman a place so high! Nowhere is the Bible so modern as in its opening pages. The domestic hearth of the

Book of Genesis hardly seems an ancient picture. There the kingdom of woman is recognised. There she is the head of the home—I had almost said, the head of the Patriarchs. At a time when elsewhere she is either a drudge or a plaything the Gallery of Genesis has represented her as free. Nay, she is there more than free; she is compelling. Woman would almost seem to give the law to man. Sarah dominates Abraham; Rebekah sways Isaac. It would make no difference though you could prove that the empire only existed in the fancy of the artist. The value lies in the thought, the idea, the aspiration. It lies in the fact that in these days there were minds that aspired to the emancipation of woman, minds that saw afar off the recognition of her equal rights with man. And they saw this because they saw more. Their appreciation of the claims of woman came from their appreciation of *passive* strength. They thought her worthy to be exalted, because they thought the domestic virtues worthy to be exalted. They had an anticipative vision of the Mount of Beatitudes, an impression that the time would come when the virtues of the valley would be hailed as the virtues of the hill. The

fruit of that vision is the enthroning among the patriarchs of a distinctively feminine soul—a soul whose greatness lay in self-denial and whose majesty was his willingness to take the lower room.

O THOU who on the mount hast blessed the virtues of the valley, let me enter into that blessing! Let me stand on the hill with Thee and see the exalting of lowly things! I used to think the Isaacs of life were unfit to survive. I thought they had no force, no character, no strength to breast the storm. I thought they would be swept away by the first wind that blew. I was wrong. Not undesignedly does Isaac precede Ishmael in Thy Gallery! The Isaacs have had the *inward* strength; theirs has been the kingdom of heaven, theirs has been the inheritance of the earth, theirs has been the fame of being called the children of God. I passed them by on the way; I rejected them as stones for my building; but they have become the chief pillars in *Thy* house. I thank Thee that Thou hast made a crown for Calvary! I thank Thee that Thou hast wreathed the brow of patient pain! I thank Thee that Thou hast a palm for the

unrepining! No more can I behold the invalid with condescending pity. No more can I view him as a lame man before a shut gate. His weakness is itself his possible gate to glory. Thou hast made his pain his portal. Thou hast called his waiting work. Thou hast deemed his silence service. Thou hast regarded his patience as praise. Thou hast accepted his tearlessness as tribute. Thou hast received his faith as a fighting. Thou hast hailed his valley as a victory. The hearts that have sung in the night are the heroes of *Thy* Pantheon; in this Thou hast fulfilled the promise, 'In *Isaac* shall thy seed be called.'

CHAPTER VIII

JACOB THE ASPIRING

THE figure which next meets us in the Bible Gallery is one which in my opinion has been generally misinterpreted; it is the form of Jacob. The common view is that this Picture is a delineation of human inconsistency. We are accustomed to think of Jacob as a character of lights and shadows mingling without reason. We see in him an unstable temperament—a life that has no settled purpose, no forecast plan, but which is swayed alternately by impulses of good and impulses of evil. We figure him as essentially a weak nature—vacillating ever between the day and the night, and unable to concentrate his mind upon a definite resolve.

And indeed, as commonly understood, the Portrait of this man *does* present an inconsistency. Let us consider the recognised interpretation. There are two young men, we are told, of absolutely opposite characters—the

brothers Jacob and Esau. Esau is the man of the present; Jacob is the man of the future. Esau is never able to look beyond the hour; Jacob has his thoughts always on the morrow. Esau is absorbed in the pleasures of sense; Jacob is intent on the pursuit of gain. Esau cares for nothing but a merry life; Jacob is willing to endure laborious days in the acquisition of material wealth. Esau has the disposition of a spendthrift; Jacob has the nature of a miser.

By and by there happens the inevitable. Esau finds himself in temporary embarrassment. He asks his brother for a loan. Jacob consents on one condition—that he will sell for the loan his birthright, his right to inherit his father's property. Esau agrees; the impulse of the moment is too strong for him. But when the moment has passed he regrets; he would fain undo. He feels that he has been overreached—that his brother has traded upon the weak point in his character. Dark thoughts rise within him; he prepares for vengeance. Jacob has a premonition of danger; he takes refuge in flight. All day he travels in wild haste; and at night, footsore and weary, he comes to a desert spot, a weird and

waste solitude. Uninviting as it is for rest, he can go no farther; he throws himself down exhausted upon a heap of stones, and falls asleep.

And then begins the seeming inconsistency. This apparently bad man has a beautiful dream—a dream so beautiful that it has become immortal. What the *best* men of the past had not seen, this fraudulent youth beholds. Heaven is opened to his sight, and the home of the Eternal is brought nigh. From earth to sky there stretches a great ladder, and on its steps *a*scend and *de*scend the angels of God. Now, the question we ask is this, Why did the artist give such a vision to such a man? Are not our dreams the product of our past! Do we ever in any sphere see a breach of evolution! Does a prosaic man leap all at once into poetry; does a worldly life bound without warning into religiousness! On the contrary, when you see sudden changes, you know assuredly that somewhere in the past there was a match struck. We see Nicodemus embalming the dead Christ, and we marvel; by and by we find that he had previously met Jesus by night. We behold Saul of Tarsus transformed into Paul the Apostle, and we won-

der; presently we learn that for a long time he had found it hard to struggle against the majesty of Jesus. The same such wonder meets us here. The youth who of all others is apparently most immersed in the waters of earth has a clearer view of the sunlight than all who had gone before him. Can we explain the paradox?

I think we can explain it, but not on the *old* interpretation of the narrative. On the supposition that Jacob was a common miser living only for the acquisition of material gain, his vision of the heavenly communion remains either a psychological puzzle or an artistic blemish. But is this the correct supposition? I say it is not. I feel sure that the previous life of Jacob has not been that prosaic thing which the popular view would have us believe. I am convinced that, according to the narrative, according to the conception of the artist, this dream of the night was in the first instance a dream of the morning, and that the vision which Jacob saw in the desert was the vision which had followed him amid the haunts of men. I will try to indicate the reason which has led me to this conclusion.

To the ordinary English reader there is a

sharp contrast between Jacob's coveting of the birthright and Jacob's dream of Divine communion. Really, however, so far from being contrasted, the latter is a development from the former. Jacob's coveting of the birthright was nothing more or less than the beginning of his dream. What *was* this birthright? The inheritance of the father's property, you say. Yes; but what was the father's property which the eldest son inherited? In England we associate that institution with something very material—with stone and lime, fields and acres, houses and lands. But in Patriarchal days this was *not* its association. To a son of the Patriarchal House the birthright of the firstborn was the High Priesthood. In the public estimation Abraham and Isaac were not simply rulers; they were the priests of the clan, the sacred ministers of the community. To them it belonged to offer sacrifice, to them it pertained to pour out intercession. They were the ladders of communion between earth and heaven, on whose steps went up the prayers of the people; they bore the weight of the national supplication. It was to this ministry in holy things that the firstborn was heir. This was his right of primogeniture; this was

his prospective privilege. And it was this which Jacob coveted. This was from the beginning his dream—the dream of being the ladder of family communion. By order of birth he was *debarred* from that privilege. Esau was the firstborn, and Esau had the claim. But to the eye of Jacob, Esau was unfit for the office. He was a secular man, a man of weights and measures; he had no taste for matters ecclesiastical. To Jacob it was a hard thing that the lot had fallen upon the wrong man; and the sense of the incongruity made him dream all the more.

Jacob, then, appears from the very outset as a mentally aspiring man. His dream at Bethel was no accident; it was a result of his whole past. What he there saw under the stars, he had seen in his heart from the very dawn. It had been the dream of his life to be this ladder, this medium of communion. To express it in modern language, his ambition was to be a son of the Church. He wanted to be the cleric of the family, the ecclesiastic of the clan; this was his aspiration, this was his dream. And in itself it was a noble dream. I do not wish to obscure the defects of Jacob; but I cannot see either from the standpoint

of the artist, or from the standpoint of the historian, that one of these defects was the desire for the birthright or the regret that it had not fallen to him. Paul says there is a noble covetousness; he bids us 'covet the best gifts.' Jacob's position was not unlike that of many a poor student—poor, I mean, in worldly goods, who is prevented by that poverty from gratifying the dearest desire of his life—the desire to be a minister of religion. He sees hundreds entering into the temple from which he is excluded—hundreds without his gifts, securing the upper seats in the synagogue. Is it strange, is it ignoble, that he should fret against the bars! Jacob had a similar excuse for his covetousness. His barrier was not want of money, but want of primogeniture; yet it was equally an *external* barrier. It was a merely technical disqualification for a post which otherwise was in every way adapted to his abilities. No wonder he dreamed of his missed destiny night and day! No wonder that, amid the cold and weariness of his Bethel vigil, the fancies of his sleep took neither the form of cold nor of weariness, but assumed the shape of a ladder between earth and heaven!

But let us not forget that in Jacob's Bethel dream there is a penal as well as a pleasurable element. He pronounced the spot of the vision to be a 'dreadful place.' This indicates that in some sense the scene jarred upon him—that it was not in every respect harmonious with his nature. The dream, in other words, had a retributive as well as a rewarding function. Before we can understand the nature of the retribution, we must put our hand upon the fault. Jacob *had* a fault. His moral danger lay precisely at the point in which he was most strong—his lofty aspiration. His desire for the birthright was noble; it was the wish to enter the Church, to become a minister of religion. But why? Not yet for the *love* of the profession, but for the *pride* of the profession. He felt that to be a ladder of communion between earth and heaven was to assume a commanding position, the most commanding position in the world. The estate he desired was not one of stone and lime; but none the less was it one of exaltation. His eye was rather on the *a*scent than on the *de*scent of the ladder. To be a churchman in those days was to be a power; it was to wield an influence far beyond the strength of the secular

arm. Jacob felt what many a young man now feels—the social uplifting involved in the clerical office; and he had more *reason* to feel it than any man has in our day. This was the fly in his ointment; this was the bane of his dream.

And this was the feeling which the vision reproved. What was the cause of that dread which Jacob experienced after his Bethel dream? It was the sight of ascending and descending angels. To a selfish man, was there anything dreadful in such a spectacle as that? Not according to the common interpretation. The common interpretation is that some angels went up the ladder and others came down. I do not think this was the artist's meaning. Taking into account the ministrant character which the Hebrew attributed to the angels, I hold the meaning to be, not that some went up and others went down, but that those who went up came down again. This is evidently Paul's view. When speaking of Christ's union of exaltation and humiliation, he says: 'He that *de*scended is the same as He that *a*scended.' I understand him to mean that this is the true interpretation of Jacob's ladder. Supposing it to be so, we get a flood

of light upon the whole narrative—light which illuminates both the past and the future in the life of Jacob, light which helps us to comprehend the weak point of his youthful dream, light which enables us to see the meaning of the shrunk sinew on the heights of Peniel.

For, what does the vision say to the life-dream of Jacob? Is it not something like this: 'Jacob, you have been in a great delusion about this matter. You have been seeking the Divine Priesthood as a source of worldly power; it is in the first instance a source of worldly weakness. He who becomes the ladder between earth and heaven must bear henceforth the weight of the multitude. On him the crowd presses, on him the care descends. He goes up only that he may come down. If he ascends into the light of God, it is that he may *de*scend into the night of Man. If he rises into the heavenly rest, it is that he may learn the earthly tossing on the pillow of stone. The birthright you seek is not to be found on the mountain, but in the valley. You think the securing of the prize would make you the superior of Esau; no, it would make you in a more direct sense than ever before

the *servant* of Esau. The higher you would climb, the deeper must be your bending. The Divine right of kings is their right to be servants—servants to the lowliest, servants to those who lie on couches not of down. If you desire your brother's birthright, it should be on the ground, not that you will gain more riches, but that you are capable of more sacrifice than he.'

And is not the principle of this mystical ladder eternally true. Is it not a matter of experience that in the mental sphere the sacrifice belongs to the *height.* It is not a sense of want that stimulates sympathy; it is a sense of possession. Infirmaries came not from the sick, but from the strong. What has instituted asylums for the blind? It is the vision of *light;* had darkness been perpetual and universal, there could have been no such institutions. What has instituted asylums for the imbecile? It is the sense of mental *power;* insanity knows not its own unsoundness. What has instituted reformatories? It is the ideal of *purity;* the unobstructed presence of sin would have made such homes impossible. The burdens of humanity belong to a soul in proportion to its perfection—not its imperfection. I would ap-

ply this even to the education of children. Do not choose your nursery governess on the principle that, as she is only for the nursery, she had better not be too learned. The man or woman who has the highest knowledge of a subject will be the clearest teacher of that subject, will make it most plain to beginners. Those who are half-way up the ladder of knowledge never speak in parables; they are incapable of breaking the bread to their child-like disciples. But he who is on the topmost round can speak to the lowliest. He is the only teacher who is clear to the unlettered crowd. To him belongs the power of making simple; he alone can discourse in parables.

And does not the climax of this principle appear in the great central fact of Christianity itself. What *is* that central fact? It is the sin-bearing of the sinless. The Fourth Evangelist calls Christ in express terms the ladder of Jacob. Why so? Clearly because in Him the principle of that ladder finds its culmination—the principle that the highest are the servants of the lowest. Of all the sons of the human race, there is only one who stands at the *foot* of the ladder—the Man who has been at the top of it. The hospital of the *moral*

pestilence gets no support from any moral invalid. Each man of dyed garments avoids brushing against the dyed garments of his brother. Simon will not speak to Magdalene; they have both dyed garments, and neither will tolerate the *other's* dye. Neither Simon nor Magdalene has yet been up the ladder; neither has received the birthright of priesthood. But *one* man has; amongst many brethren Jesus is the firstborn. And, because He alone has the birthright, He alone has the pain. The man who goes up to the heights of holiness is the man who must come down to the depths of sin—down to Simon, down to Magdalene, down to the lepers of corruption and the demoniacs of passion. Imagine a constitution of things in which every physical blow gave its pain, not to the man struck, but to some *other* man. We do not see this in the material world; but Christianity says that it is the law of the moral world. According to Christianity, it is the angel at the *top* of the ladder who is bruised by the pillow of stone. The deepest moral corruption is unfelt by the man who possesses it. It is felt by the man who does *not* possess it, who walks in white by the side of the crystal river. The penalty of

sin falls heaviest on the holy; the Cross of Calvary first crucifies the pure. Spiritual elevation can never bring worldly *elation*. When Jacob reaches that summit of the ladder from which Esau is debarred, the sight of his debarred brother will be, not a triumph, but a trial.

What was the *effect* of Jacob's dream? In one word, it was 'Peniel.' We are in a great mistake if we imagine that there is no connection between the angels he beheld on the ladder and the angel with whom he wrestled until the breaking of the day. He never would have wrestled at Peniel if he had not dreamed at Bethel. The dream at Bethel gave him a conscience; there lay its terror, there lay its glory. It told him that the birthright he had received was a burden, a burden he was bound to bear. It told him that to be an angel of God was a very serious thing; it asked him if he had realised *how* serious. When Jacob awoke, he awoke as a new man, or rather, with an additional man *in* him. He had lain down a single individual; he rose a double consciousness. Two lives were within him, strove within him. There was the old life which he knew so well, and which he used to call 'himself.' That

was still there, but it was no longer there alone. Another stood opposite to it and disputed its rule. That other was a life of strange appearance. It was like a flattering portrait of himself; but it seemed also to *contradict* himself. It resembled one of the angels of his dream. It was the presence in his soul of a new ideal—a new object for living. Hitherto, he had lived to overtop *Esau;* but the new presence said, 'Let Esau overtop *you!*' The new presence became very troublesome. It disputed with him constantly. It interrupted him in the market-place. It checked him at the receipt of custom. It barred him at the buying of land. It cried out when he gave false measure. It said at the most inconvenient times, 'Remember your brother!'—'Remember your neighbour!'—'Remember your fellow-man!' It made him less sharp in bargaining, less acute in things pertaining to his interest. A certain kind of energy departed from him—the force called 'grasping.' Men saw the change, and described it to his disparagement. They expressed it epigrammatically by saying that there had been a shrinking in the sinew of his thigh. Yet it came not from a diminished, but

from an added, energy; it was all the effect of the new conscience—the ministrant angel of the Bethel dream.

There is a curious suggestion in the picture of this conflicting period of Jacob's life. The angel with whom he is struggling is represented as saying, 'Let me go! for the day breaketh.' I understand this to mean that Jacob found it easier to be good by night than by day. I understand it to mean that he formed fine resolutions under the stars which he tended to break in the sunshine. He is not singular in this; it is to some extent the experience of us all. There is a special solemnity about the night. I do not think it lies where it is supposed to lie—in the vastness of the spaces. Rather do I attribute it to an opposite impression—the sense of individual nearness to the centre of things. Jacob grows solemn when he sees that heaven and earth have a ladder between them. This is ever the source of night's solemnity. The individual feels himself less the member of a crowd, more an object of solitary contemplation. The narrative says of Jacob, 'When he was *alone* there wrestled with him a man.' It is by night that we most feel this solitude—so favourable to

the wrestling angel. Our importance as units is *magnified* in the night. We seem to ourselves more worthy; therefore the ideal man within us awakes from his sleep and upbraids us. But when the day comes, we lose our individuality once more. Our sense of importance dies. We feel ourselves to be fragments again—atoms in the crowd, drops in the ocean of life. Conscience is never so low as when the pressure of the multitude makes me undervalue my own soul; and it is the daybreak that brings the pressure. Night says, 'You are alone with God'; morning says, 'How can God be affected by a puny life like you!'

And this, I think, explains the fact that conscience is often most powerful in the hour of death. Then, as in the night, I feel myself alone. The crowd has melted from my view, and the fashion of this world is dissolving like a mimic scene, and there is none but God and I. Very finely has this principle been grasped by the great artist in Genesis. With strong persistency he has been making the solitary hours of Jacob his grand hours; the night of Bethel has been his golden dream, the night of Peniel his golden struggle. But his greatest glory is reserved for his hour of greatest soli-

tude—the hour of death. There the angel of the ladder and of the struggle appears once more, and he appears as the climax of his former self. He is still the angel of ministration; but he is no longer a mere helper to *Jacob*—he is inciting Jacob to bless others. The dying man becomes for the first time the universal benefactor. In his hour of death the ministrant conscience becomes dominant, supreme, overmastering. Even the poetry of his language, grand as it is, is left in the shade by the glow of his altruism. He has no thought for anything private, anything local, anything personal. He has emancipated himself from individual ambition. His aspiring has become unselfish. His own griefs and joys are forgotten. The *tribes* of Israel glitter in his sight—their duties and their dangers. The burdens of the *people* crowd upon his heart—their weightedness and their soreness. His hour of death is his hour of priesthood; he has only reached the birthright in the valley of the shadow.

LORD, give me the blessing of Jacob—his best blessing—his power to bless! Doubtless it must come with a shrunk sinew; I cannot

keep the song of the lark when I get the seal of sonship; I must enter into the pain of my Lord. Yet that pain is better than the world's joy. I have heard men speak of pain as a blot on Thy universe. They were wrong; it is the birthright of the *un*blotted. Give me this birthright, O my God! Put the scar of sympathy in my heart! Let me feel my brother's thorn! Make it impossible for me to stay at the top of the ladder, even though that be heaven! Send me down the golden stair—down to the pillows of stone, down to the nights of sorrow, down to the limbs that are languid, down to the souls that are sad! Send me with a breath of Eden, send me with a flower of Paradise, send me with a cluster of the grapes of Canaan! Send me to the hours that precede the daybreak—those darkest hours which come before the dawn! Send me to the hearts without a home, to the lives without a love, to the crowds without a compass, to the ranks without a refuge! Send me to the children that none have blessed, to the famished that none have fed, to the sick that none have visited, to the demoniac that none have calmed, to the fallen that none have

lifted, to the leper that none have touched, to the bereaved that none have comforted! Then shall I have the birthright of the firstborn; then shall I have the blessing of the mighty God of Jacob.

CHAPTER IX

JOSEPH THE OPTIMIST

THE figure which stands next in the group of the Great Gallery is perhaps the most popular of all the Old Testament Portraits. There are few who are not familiar with the story of Joseph. Even those who know little of the Bible—to whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mere names, and the less prominent figures not even so much, can tell you all about *Joseph*. Why is this? Is it because the story of Joseph is painted in more vivid colours than any of the other narratives? It is not so painted. It is less graphic in its delineation than the portraiture of the Garden of Eden; it is less sublime than the description of the Flood; it is less poetic than the vision of Bethel or the scene of Peniel. Yet neither the Garden of Eden nor the slopes of Ararat, neither the plain of Bethel nor the heights of Peniel, have yielded so many flowers to fancy as the ground trodden by the feet of Joseph.

Or is it because Joseph is a greater character than his predecessors and successors? He is not greater. He never reaches the sacrificial heights of Abraham nor the sacrificial depths of Isaac. Like Moses, he is in Egypt; but he is *not*, like Moses, a maker of history. It is difficult to see how his brilliant government contributed anything to the Exodus or influenced in any respect the fortunes of Egypt herself. Neither the personality nor the public position of Joseph account for his effect on posterity. How is that effect to be explained?

If I were allowed to express the answer in childlike language, I would say that the cause of the narrative's attractiveness is that the story has a good end. What I mean is, not only that it culminates in brightness, but that the brightness is found to have been produced by the actual clouds of the narrative. This is, I think, a point in which the Portrait of Joseph is unique amongst Old Testament figures. You will find any number of narratives that wind up with the prosperity of their heroes; but I cannot at present recall another in which the trial is found to be a *part* of the prosperity. Noah emerges from the flood into the sunshine; but the flood remains a calamity still.

Daniel is saved from the lions; but he is saved by the allaying of their fury. Job gets back his possessions; but he gets them back as a reversal of his adverse circumstances, not as a *result* of these circumstances. The case of Joseph is very different. His peculiarity is not that he rises to a pinnacle of earthly splendour; *most* of the Old Testament figures do that. It is that his splendour has come out of his *dungeon*. We are made to see, to feel, that he would never have been on the pinnacle at all if it had not been for his misfortunes in the valley, that his sunshine has come from his suffering, that the avenue of shade has led him to the palace of light.

I have said that this is a unique experience in the Old Testament; but it is the universal experience in the New. The New Testament is nearer to the view of suffering expressed in the Portrait of Joseph than to any other theory whatever. The doctrine of the Gospel is, not simply that after dark the light comes, but that the garment which at night we call dark is that which in the morning we pronounce luminous. The words of the latest Evangelist are, 'Your sorrow shall be *turned into* joy.' It is the transformation of sorrow rather than

the abolition of sorrow that is contemplated. The watchword of Christianity is 'perfect *through* suffering.' The glory of Christ is not something which He reaches as a compensation for the cross; it is the lifting up of the cross itself. It has become a simple matter of history that Christ has triumphed by the very steps which were taken to defeat Him. He has not been lifted out of the valley; it is the valley itself that has been exalted. He has not been freed from service; it is service itself that has ceased to be ignominious. He has not been exempted from further stooping; He has been exempted from hindrances to further stooping. His sorrow has been 'turned into joy.'

Now, I say that the nearest analogy which the Old Testament presents to this standpoint is the Portrait of Joseph. Even the Book of Job does not reach the *summit* of the hill. That book does not attain the *highest* optimism—even in its climax. It shows us a good man rewarded for his patience in trial. That is satisfactory, but it is not purely optimistic; the trial still remains as so much lost time. If a man has been interrupted in a race, it does not reinstate him to set him on the road

once more. He has lost ground in the interval; his competitors are on before him; the renewal of his original power may never again secure his original object. But if you could tell the man that the interruption came to him when he was on the wrong road, if you could tell him that he tripped just when he was about to take the false turning, a turning which has led his competitors astray, the matter would assume a very different aspect. He would then regard his interruption as itself his greatest stroke of good fortune; his fetter would be found to be his wing. Pure optimism is not the belief that all will come right; it is the belief that all is right *now*, that nothing has ever been wrong. It is not simply the contemplation of an ultimate abundance; it is the wreathing with glory of times of scarcity. It is the exaltation of trial itself into the position of a step in the great ladder by which Man ascends to the summit of his nature. Now, this is the optimism which is reached in the story of Joseph. It is an alternation of lights and shadows; but in the shadows, as in the lights, the man equally moves upward. The tragedy and the triumph alike minister to his progress, alike conspire to make him the benefactor of

his kind. It is not that he is lifted into the sunlight; his *crosses* are lifted into the sunlight. He succeeds by reason of his seeming failure. His thorn of yesterday becomes his flower of to-day; his strength is perfected in weakness.

The truth is, the Portrait of Joseph is to my mind a philosophical picture—the earliest attempt to delineate a theory of the universe in the form of a narrative. I do not mean that it had not its basis in fact. I mean that here, for the first time, there was an eye to *observe* the fact. The man who narrated this life is more than a recorder; he is a theorist. He has not only exhibited the materials; he has woven them together. What he has in his mind is really an essay or sermon. If he had entitled it 'An Inquiry into the Causes of Human Suffering,' he could not have more clearly revealed his intention. That intention is to vindicate by experience the ways of God to Man. Instead of vindicating by an argument, he selects a life—a life which shall run from youth to age, and be the normal type of *all* lives. And I am bound to say that in this delineation he has passed quite beyond his time, beyond his race. He has claimed a larger empire for God than his countrymen claimed for

Him. None of his countrymen, so far as I know—not even the author of the Book of Job—recognised suffering as a part of the mosaic; it is always either a penalty or a trial. Here it is a fragment of the building—a necessary fragment, a contribution to that great temple whose completion is to perfect the praise of God. Joseph himself is made the spokesman of the new evangel. He comes before us as the advocate for optimism. He confronts the facts of his own life, and claims absolute good fortune. He does not say that the joy has *exceeded* the sorrow. He does not say that on the whole the lights have outweighed the shadows. He *denies* the shadows. He refuses to admit the *reality* of the clouds. He claims his adversaries as his unconscious friends, 'As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant if for good.'

Let us look at the philosophy of this life of Joseph. Those who are conversant with music tell us that each of Chopin's Preludes has three parts, which embody a distinct sequence. In the first, the melody is free and unrestrained. In the second, it seems to move through tangled places—to be impeded in its way by the intervention of resisting elements.

But in the third, the melody comes out into the open once more; the tangles vanish, the impediments are removed, and the notes of the first part reappear in a new connection and with a fresh power. Now, this is precisely the music which I find in the life of Joseph. He is one of Chopin's Preludes. He has his three periods. He has his period of youthful freedom, when his life flies through the open with wings of fire. Then comes a seeming closure. He is no longer in the outer air. He is shut within a tunnel; he is to all appearance debarred from progress, evermore. All at once he makes a discovery. The tunnel has been itself a progress. He has been moving underground all the time he thought himself stranded—has been moving by a shorter way. The dark road has been the quicker road. The notes of the morning are repeated in the afternoon; but they are sung on a higher hill and under a purer sky. Come, and let us traverse these three parts of the Prelude—the notes of the morning, the notes overshadowed, the shadows themselves merging into the symphony! We shall find in it the earliest effort of the Hebrew race to transcend itself, its first deliberate attempt to break away from its own

theories, and to seek a humanitarian basis for the action of God.

The drama opens with the picture of a petted boy—a child of his father's old age. He has two qualities by heredity, and one by education. From his grandfather Abraham he has received the spirit of optimism; and that is good. From his father Jacob he has received the spirit of ambition; and that is also good. But from his mode of education he has received the spirit of selfishness; and that vitiates everything. He is an optimist for his world; but his world unfortunately contains only one person—this little boy himself. He has too wide a horizon, too unobstructed a view. No interest has been allowed to clash with *his* interest. His father's will has been *his* will. Brothers have been discounted; he has been the favoured child. He is eager to preserve his pre-eminence. He feeds the flame of his father's partiality; he tells everything that can disparage his brothers. And because he *thinks* of their disparagement, he *dreams* of their disparagement. The wishes of his night repeat the wishes of his day. He is always seeing *his* star overtopping the other stars, his sheaf outgrowing the other sheaves.

That the streets of London are to be paved with gold is a small thing; but the bells are ringing out that *he* is to be *Lord Major* of the golden city—and that makes its prosperity worth a hymn of praise. Joseph's world has as yet but one inhabitant—himself.

Now, what is wrong here? He needs to get his mind widened, you say. Not at all; he needs to get his mind narrowed. He has too many gates open in *life*, and therefore he has too few gates open in sympathy. The infirmity of this boy Joseph is just his want of encumbrances. He has never met with a shut door, never encountered an opposing wall, never had to ask for anything twice. There has not been cultivated in him the spirit of prayer —the spirit of need; and therefore there has not been cultivated in him the spirit of sympathy. All inward widening is produced by outward narrowing. How shall I pass from the life of the egotist to the life of the humanitarian? Only through my own strait gate. The wing by which I fly to your trouble is the wing which is wounded; the hand by which I help you is the hand which is maimed. In vain shall I enter your desert till I have tasted the waters of Marah. Not by fearless *running*

shall I overtake and lift your burden, but by halting on my own thigh. The education in sympathy is the experience of personal bruises; of every true comforter we can say, 'By his stripes we are healed.'

And so, Joseph must have the second part of the Prelude—the period of enclosure. It comes; and, lo, the gates which were all open are all shut! The boy had run in the free air of heaven; the youth is cribbed, cabined, and confined. The hours of morning had owned no master; the noonday is one perpetual, one enforced service. His prospect in life is seemingly blotted out. He is stolen from home. He is proclaimed to be dead. He is sold as a slave to a band of Ishmaelites. He is transferred by them to an Egyptian soldier. He is suspected innocently of grave offences. He is immured in a dungeon. Time and space seem to have ended for him. In his own land he is already numbered among the dead; in this foreign land he is *un*numbered either among dead or living—he is a cypher. He might be painted at this moment with his foot resting upon his own grave.

And, all the time, beneath that grave there is a gold-mine. Never in all his life has Joseph

been so near to glory—moral and physical glory. For the first time in his existence he puts out his hand to help another; and accidentally it touches the gold-mine. Having no longer a dream of his own to interpret, he begins to interpret the dreams of his fellow-prisoners. He reveals his poetic genius as he never has revealed it before, just because he is not listening to his own singing; and he reveals it to some purpose. Little did he imagine when he entered that dungeon that he was to have such an audience! One of his fellow-prisoners is, in three days, to be in touch with royalty—in touch with a royal personage who wants, beyond all things, an interpreter of dreams. Joseph might have ranged the plains of his native Mesopotamia in wild freedom for a hundred years and never have found such a chance of promotion as came to him within the precincts of that gloomy and stifling dungeon.

Then comes the third part of the Prelude. We are in a new scene—the court of Pharaoh; Joseph stands besides the throne. The boy of the desert, the youth of the dungeon, has become the adviser of royalty. Yet, strangely do the notes of the first part blend with those of

the third! Mesopotamia has come over into Egypt! The enemies of his boyhood are there —those brothers whom he had wronged, and who had wronged him! His aged father is there—that father who had believed him to be dead! The old patriarchal life is there, like a song of home in a strange land! But they are all changed—they are all more worth having. The father has given up his unjust partiality; Joseph no longer *needs* his special care. The brothers have given up their jealousy; the Prime Minister of Egypt is *beyond* their jealousy. *Joseph* has given up his *selfishness;* his dreams are now humanitarian. The relieving of the pain of others led him at first to a gold-mine, and, ever since, it has become a joy for its own sake. And, remember, all this reunion, all this better union, has come from a dark cloud. What is it that has joined the hands of Joseph and his brethren? It is famine. They have fled to Egypt for corn; they have heard of the great economist who administers there. They dream not it is their brother. They are flying in panic from to-day, and they meet their yesterday. They are driven by fear, and they fall into the arms of hope.

They come to beg of a stranger, and they find themselves fêted by a brother.

There is only one feature of this Portrait which has been alleged to be an artistic blemish—a blemish in its picture of optimism. It has been said, Why did Joseph let his father believe him to be dead for so many years? We are asked, Could you imagine a high-souled young man, living within a reasonable distance from the place of his birth, and aware that his father was still residing in his old home—yet keeping his existence for years concealed from that father, and allowing the paternal heart to count him among the dead! I heard one of the most eloquent of preachers the other day, in strong detraction from the character of Joseph, put this side of the case with great force and with great ability. 'What do you think of that!' I said afterwards to one of the audience. 'Oh,' was the reply, 'he ought to remember that it was the fault of the *dramatist!*'

I must confess that I do not regard this answer as satisfactory. What we want to know is, why such an otherwise admirable Picture should apparently contain such a flaw. It is beside the question to discuss whether that

flaw lay in the life or in its delineator. In either case the problem to be solved is on the *canvas*. The seeming blemish is now part of the Picture, and there lies the sting. The Picture is, otherwise, beautiful. It describes the development of a life from selfishness to unselfishness. If it has recorded an act of heartlessness at the climax, it has failed in portraying its own plan. But has it? What if this so-called act of heartlessness is in reality an act of *heart?* What if the seeming blemish is a colour of new beauty? What if the apparent flaw is an added flower? I am convinced that it is. This act of Joseph is no neglect either on his part or on the part of the dramatist. It is a designed silence—a pause in the music which is meant to give *effect* to the music. It is no sign of crudeness either in the man or in his biographer; it is the mark of ripe development, of autumn fulness.

For consider, had not Joseph's life in youth been a thorn to his father—the greatest moral thorn of his father's old age! Had not the life of this son been the one rock on which Jacob's ship had been in danger of foundering! Had not his partiality for Joseph been the bane to family union, the barrier to the progress of

the kingdom of God! Had it not threatened to hasten the severance of the twelve tribes of Israel! Had not the fancied death of Joseph been a great *boon* to his father! It had brought family peace. It had secured unity around the hearth. It had broken a régime of manifest injustice. Was it not well that the delusion should be preserved! Was it not best that for the present the old man should be allowed still to think that his son was dead! Did not Joseph himself owe this as an atonement to his brethren! Had not he too been unjust, selfish, monopolising, eager to grasp more than his share! How could he better make reparation than by effacing himself, allowing his name to be blotted out from the living members of that circle whose harmony he had done so much to disturb, and whose unity he had helped to destroy!

I hold, then, that this seemingly dark side is a part of the bright mosaic, a contribution to the artist's conception that all things work together for good. I cannot detect a single feature in the Portrait of Joseph which has not been placed there for the express purpose of advocating the cause of optimism. Even the closing scene of all, the hour of his death, is

grandly consistent with the ideal of the Picture. Why is it that the writer to the Hebrews, that great spectator of the Great Gallery, has fixed upon this final hour of Joseph as the typical hour of his life? 'By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.' One would have thought the life was rich enough in incidents to make it unnecessary to draw illustrations from its *close*. Why not say that the optimistic faith of Joseph appeared in the dreams of his boyhood, or in the courage of his youth, or in the beneficence of his manhood! Why not go back to the sanguineness on the Mesopotamian plains or the fortitude in the Egyptian dungeon! Why select the example from the hour which least distinguishes one life from another—the period of the dark valley! It is because, to be optimistic in that valley is optimism indeed, because the man who can *there* keep the light in his soul has proved that his faith is supreme. And is there any optimism like that of Joseph's closing hour! Was it not a bold thing to believe that Israel would come out of Egypt! Was it not a daring thing to dream that this little band

would not be absorbed in the Egyptian waves, but would issue forth as an independent river! Was it not a brave thing to hope that this insignificant clan would keep its nationality and its name amid the rush and roar of waters! Nay, is not this *still* the crowning marvel of Israel! Blended with every land, deprived of local habitation, denuded of temple and sacrifice, denied a voice among the nations, refused a place in the political arena of the world, this people holds fast its hope and will not let it go. And its hope is the faith of the dying Joseph—the faith that Egypt will not absorb it, that culture will not outgrow it, that modern life will not supplant it, that in the days to come it will *resume* its reign.

LORD, teach me the power of life's seeming arrests! Often have I felt the grief of Joseph. Often have the bright dreams of youth appeared to fade, and the shadows of the prison-house to close over the growing man. I have cried in the bitterness of my soul, 'The promise of the morning is broken; I shall never now *find* the treasure for which I have sought so long!' And lo, I have found it *in* the prison-

house, *in* the dungeon, in a panel of the locked door! I had sought it in all likely places—in the fields, in the woods, in the homes of the rich and mighty; and it has come to me in the one spot where its presence seemed impossible. Thou hast answered me as Thou answered Job—'out of the whirlwind.' I had been looking to all *calm* places for an answer. I had looked to the gentle dawn; I had gazed on the roseate morning; I had stood in the pensive twilight; I had communed with the still and starry night; I had listened upon my bed when the pulse of life beat low. From none of these did my answer come. Then the *whirlwind* swept by, and I said, 'There will be Divine silence *now;* I cannot hope for Thy voice any more!' And behold, it was from the whirlwind that Thy voice *came!* What earth's silence could not give, what earth's calmness could not give, what earth's zephyrs could not give, was given by the storm! Let me never again fear the shut gate; let me never more dread the interrupted journey! Teach me that my Calvary may be my crown! Tell me that my Patmos may be my promotion! Show me that my Damascus darkness may be my dazzling daylight! Reveal to me that there may

be progress through life's pauses, voices in life's valley, symmetry in life's sighs, music in life's maladies, beauty in life's burdens, work in life's wilderness! Then shall I know why this Portrait has been placed in the Great Gallery of deathless souls.

CHAPTER X

MOSES THE PRACTICAL

As we pass from the Portrait of Joseph to the Portrait of Moses, we make the transition to a new phase of Semitic life. All the foregoing figures are those of idealists. They are all seeking something beyond the actual, something that would abolish the present order of things. Young Adam wants a transference of the Eden government, a transference which would make him lord of the whole Garden. Abel wants a form of sacrifice altogether in advance of his age. Enoch is aiming after a life which can only be realised in heaven. Noah is seeking a reform which must involve a renovation of the earth. Abraham is trying to establish in the world a kingdom of Divine righteousness. Jacob is in search of a ladder between earth and heaven. Joseph is the representative of youth's romantic dreams. They are all men of the future—men who seek the stones for their temple from scenes and cir-

cumstances not present to the eye. But, with the Portrait of Moses, we enter another world—the real world. Here for the first time we are confronted by a man who proposes to build the temple with the actual stones of the quarry. He says to his countrymen, 'You have been looking too far away to find the material for your Tower of Babel; this commandment is not in heaven, neither is it beyond the sea; but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart.'

Here is the advent of a new régime. Man has begun to contemplate the possibility of a palace which shall be reared out of earthly elements, a palace which shall rise from the daily work of ordinary human souls. Salvation by obedience to law, salvation by the performance of the hourly duty and the fulfilment of the habitual task, salvation by the adequate discharge of the common round of earth's requirements for the labouring man—*that* was the goal which glittered before the eyes of Moses. It is in the pursuit of this goal that Moses is distinguished from all his predecessors. His name has been associated with many things. It has been associated with the building of the tabernacle. It has been linked

with the origin of the Jewish ritual. It has been connected with the deliverance from Egypt. It has been intertwined with the life of the desert. It has been identified with the discovery of the Promised Land. But none of these things is *distinctive* of Moses. You will find each of them foreshadowed in the previous figures. You will find an earlier tabernacle in Eden. You will see an earlier ritual in Abel. You will behold an anticipation of a promised land in Enoch. You will meet faith sustained amid a desert in Abraham. You will witness the provision for an Egyptian deliverance in the closing act of Joseph. But there is one sphere in which Moses stands alone, in which he is the first founder, the primitive inaugurator. It is in the discovery that common life may be religious life. That God was in the Garden, men knew; that God was in the sanctuary, men knew; that God was beside the altar, men knew. But that God should be in secular places, that the home should be itself a sanctuary, that the household fire should be an altar fire, that the honouring of a human parent should be deemed an act of piety, that the observance of a neighbour's rights should be esteemed one of the rites of worship—this

was a new departure in the religious life of Man!

To Moses belongs the inauguration of this development. Our first impression is that the task set before him was a very easy one. It seems a simple thing to teach the common duties of life. If it were a *creed* that had to be taught, if it were a system of philosophy, or even an order of worship, we could appreciate the need for a great founder; but the most ordinary mind would seem adequate to the task of saying, 'All the duties of your life are to be counted *religious* duties.' Yet in truth this impression is entirely wrong. It was simply the most difficult thing in the world for a man of that time to reach such a conclusion. It has not been particularly easy in any age. Religion has ever tended to present itself to the mind as the antithesis to the world. Grace has ever appeared as the opposite of nature, faith as the antagonist of sight. What St. James pronounces a completed development of the religious life—the visiting of the widows and the fatherless—would still be regarded by many as only an incipient Christianity. So foreign to the natural mind is the Mosaic idea, that men in all ages have re-

quired to *grow* into it. Moses required to grow into it. Did it ever strike you that, of all the lives depicted in the Gallery, he is the most tardy in entering on his mission. All the previous figures of the Gallery accept their vocation the moment it is presented to them. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, move at once toward the beckoning light; even Jacob does, though his old nature struggles within him. But Moses holds back. He is long in accepting, slow in obeying, late in achieving. Do you think this is an accident in the Portrait of the Great Gallery! It is one of its most designed features. The painter of this figure knew that the sphere selected for it was not a natural sphere. Therefore he describes Moses, not as rushing into it, but as creeping into it. Let us follow the pencil of this inspired artist. He has revealed to us that process of development by which a man learns the religious value of practical morality. Let us stand in the Great Gallery and observe that process. Let us trace it; let us expound it; let us apply it to our daily lives.

There are four periods in the education of Moses—four stages through which he climbed into the place prepared for him. The first

might be called his period of unconsciousness —the time when he was not a moral giver, but a moral recipient. We *all* begin with such a period. Our first lessons in morality are derived, not from the good we do, but from the good we receive. I am deeply impressed with the truth of this principle in human experience. I do not think we get our earliest notions of morality from active service, but from passive recipiency. Where did you first learn the beauty of justice? Was it from doing a just action? No; it was from having a just action done to you. Where did you first learn the charm of sympathy? Was it from condoling with another's distress? No; it was from being condoled with by another in *your* distress. Our original moral lessons do not come to us in the *form* of lessons, but in the form of benefits—kindness received, gifts bestowed, dangers averted, penalties remitted. It was these that wakened within us the impulse of generosity. It was these that stirred within us the sense of beneficence. It was these that set before us the ideals of chivalry. It was these that roused in our hearts the love of mercy. The recognition of the law of conscience was

in the beginning an unconscious recognition; it was produced by favours received.

Now, this was the first stage of the moral training of Moses. In early days he was merely a recipient. He was more indebted to the goodness of others than was any man in the Gallery. The writer to the Hebrews naïvely says, 'By faith Moses was hid three months.' No doubt; but by the faith of whom? Not of Moses himself, but of kind friends who wanted to give him a chance in life. The civilisation of the day had determined to give him *no* chance. It looked upon his infancy and said, 'This is one of the children unfit to live; let him die; let him make room for other and stronger lives!' And so, the culture of Egypt rejected the child Moses, cast him out to perish in the waters of the Nile. He was found by the hands of philanthropy; he was rescued by human compassion. He comes before us as a foundling, a child of charity. He is the first of that great company of waifs and strays whom human benevolence has gathered into the fold. He is cast upon the waters as one unfit to survive; he is rescued by way of experiment. Human charity gives him a chance—a chance to show his *power* of survival. He is taken up

by royal hands, Egyptian hands. He is planted in an Egyptian environment; he is trained in the culture of the Pharaohs; he is withdrawn from all the associations of his own people. Everything is done to make him forget—forget his Hebrew origin, forget the traditions of his race. He is educated in Egypt's wisdom, nursed in Egypt's ritual, stimulated by Egypt's promises. If he will give his life to Egypt, the ball of fortune is already at his feet; he may, if he will, become the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Meantime, by that same Egypt his own people are being oppressed, enslaved. Every form of injustice is being practised upon them—extortion, violence, insult, treachery, contempt, scorn. The eye of young Moses sees that injustice. How has he come to see it? Simply by his own experience of the contrary. By her very kindness to himself, Egypt has taught him her *un*kindness to his countrymen. She has put into his hands the mirror by which he sees and condemns her. And so, the first period closes and the second period begins. When next the scene opens, Moses is a young man. He stands on the brow of life's hill. There has come to him that period which

comes to every man—the hour when he is called to make his choice between two roads in life. The writer to the Hebrews does not scruple to say that the choice presented to Moses was identical with the choice presented to Christ, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

And is he not right! Was not the choice of Christ in the wilderness precisely the choice of Moses! The tempter said to the Son of Man, 'Which of the two will you have—royalty or rags?' He offered Him on the one hand the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, on the other a life of privation for the good of humanity. The reproach of Christ was that He chose the latter. He lost favour in the eyes of men, because He preferred the life of humanitarian sacrifice to the life of gilded splendour. Even such was the choice of Moses. He selected that alternative which was afterwards Christ's reproach. Two destinies lay before him—to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter or to be a son of despised Israel—to bask in the sunshine of Egypt or to share

the obloquy of the Hebrew race. Which should he take—the glitter or the gloom? Should he ascend into a position of worldly glory, or should he go down into a life of virtuous obscurity? It is a moment of crisis—that crisis which marks the transition from youth to manhood. Presently, his decision is made; he has chosen. He will go down. He will take the lot of his people. He will forego his bright prospects, forego the glitter and the gold. He descends into the valley; and the world laughs loud and long. The hearing of that laugh is the bitterest part of the pain; it is the message of Egypt's reproach. 'What matter!' says the writer to the Hebrews, 'a greater than Moses is to bear the same reproach in the days to come; he may well endure a ridicule which has placed him on the path of the Son of Man!'

Here closes the second period. It is the period in which he abjures the world and withdraws from its temptations. Is it, then, the completion of his training? No; there is still a great gulf fixed between him and his goal. To abjure evil is much, but it is not all. It is only half of the process—the ascetic half. The task for which Moses was training was

humanitarianism—the taking up of the burdens of Man. That which was required of him was no mere abjuration of the world; it was a reforming of the world. It was not simply a refusal to join in the oppression of his people; it was the effort to lift that oppression. Accordingly, when the third period of Moses opens, the impression we receive is one of disappointment. The youth has become a middle-aged man; the courtier of Egypt has become a shepherd in Midian. The ardour of his choice has not been supplemented by ardour of deed. Its only result has been asceticism. He has fled from the scene where his people were oppressed, but he has done nothing to relieve the oppression. He has been seemingly wasting his time. It would have been a real waste of time in any other sphere; but in the sphere of morality the example of Moses is to become a precedent. I am struck by the fact that between the age of moral choice and the period of outward action the Bible loves to interpose a time of rest. The Child-Jesus sees His mission at the age of twelve, but only enters upon it at the age of thirty. The man of Tarsus beholds a light from heaven and is eager at once to follow it; but he is sent for

three years to ponder in the solitudes of Arabia. There is a time in moral history when a voice says to every man, 'Come up into this desert place, and rest a while!' It would seem as if the morning were not the test of a man, as if the hour of excitement were not the hour of surest promise. The Divine Voice says: 'Go, and think over it. Do not yield at once to the impulse of the morning. Try how long it will survive. Test it by the circling of the hours. See if it will outlast the season of excitement. You can march to battle at the sound of trumpet and the beat of drum; can you be resolute for the struggle when there are no accompaniments of glory! Only *then* can you say that you have received your call.'

That is the meaning of a saying which is applied to Moses during this third period, 'He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.' It means that Moses kept his humanitarian impulse in the absence of human motives—kept it spite of silence and solitude, kept it when the sands of life were low. He had never ceased to hear that suppressed cry which from the days of his youth had sounded through the land of bondage—the cry of that enslaved Israel whose blood was his own. And now the

probation is over, and the call comes. The fourth period opens. The scene is the desert of Horeb where Moses has gone to tend his flocks. It is a day of sweltering heat; the bushes seem on fire. The shepherd is weary—weary from the burden of the sun, weary from the burden at his heart. He lies down to rest. He fixes his eye on one of the seared and flaming bushes—a stability favourable to slumber. In that attitude he falls asleep. He dreams. His dream is half from nature, half from God. God speaks to him through the environment he had himself chosen. He had fixed his waking eye on one flaming bush. That one bush remained in his dream. It seemed to burn perpetually, yet inconsumably. Then, from the midst of it, there came a voice—the voice of the Lord. And what it said was virtually this: 'Moses, it is *I* that am burning. It is I that am on fire with the pain of humanity. It is I that am scorched with the heat of man's day. It is time now you came to help Me. You have lived long enough in the *sentiment;* it is time you began to act. You have had the righteousness to abandon Egypt; but there awaits you a deeper righteousness. You must go back to Egypt once more—to bring out My treasures.

You have pitied the burning bush; you must become *part* of that bush. You have refused to conform to the fashion of Egypt; you must consent to lead the humanitarian band.'

For, be it observed that the call of Moses is a call to humanitarianism. There is nothing local about it, nothing national. He is not sent simply to break the bonds of a people. His ultimate mission is to *give* them bonds—bonds of a new kind—the bonds of human brotherhood. He is sent to put them under law in a region where before they were lawless. He is to bind each man by the rights of his brother —by the claims of justice, by the ties of sympathy, by the instincts of the heart. He is to introduce a restraining force, a force which will say, 'Thou shalt not.' Not the liberation from Egypt, but the binding of Mount Sinai, is the supreme object of the mission of Moses. He is wakened into humanitarianism that he may lead his countrymen into the service of Man.

For, remember that the law of Mount Sinai is a humanitarian law. It is not local, it is not temporal; it is human. When Moses ascended the mount to commune with God, he ascended 'above all principalities and powers.' He went

up to receive a law which was to be distinctive of no nation—which was to be neither Jewish nor Egyptian nor Greek nor Roman nor English, but the property of the whole world—of man as Man. And when he came down from the mount, it was such a law he *brought* with him—a law which broke the boundaries of separate lands, which rested the obligations of morality on things which were universal, which proclaimed the sacredness of the family and the value of life and the rights of personal possession and the solemnity of man's word to man. And why was Moses thus successful in the framing of a universal law? I have no hesitation in saying it was because he had felt the needs of the lowest. The needs of men at the foot of the ladder are the needs of man universal. If Moses had only been trained in the wants of *Egypt*, he would only have been the lawgiver for the *upper* classes, for the men who possessed 'the treasures.' But when he was trained in the wants of the slave population, when he was confronted by the bush of life as it burned in the *valley*, he met with the wants of humanity itself. The sorrows of the valley are cosmopolitan sorrows—they will be found on plain and mountain too. There are

wants on plain and mountain that do not reach the vale; but the wants of the vale ascend to plain and mountain. He who has felt the fire of the bush in Midian is able to legislate for the *world*.

I believe the cosmopolitan character of the work of Moses is the thought which dominates the final scene with which the Great Gallery associates his name. That final scene is painted with dramatic boldness; Moses is buried in an unknown sepulchre by the hand of God alone. What is symbolised in the burial by the hand of God we need not inquire. Perhaps it is a metaphorical way of saying that he was buried by Nature, not by Man. Did he ascend the heights of Pisgah as an explorer of the Promised Land? Was he smitten on the summit by the winter cold; and did he, in returning, leave his body wrapped in wreaths of snow? We cannot tell. But, one thing is clear. In the thought of the artist, in the thought of the Great Gallery, the hiding of his burial-place is a *designed* thing. Whence this concealment? Lest his countrymen should reverence him too much? I think the meaning of the artist is the contrary. It was lest his countrymen should reverence him too little, should localise him,

should say, 'He is one of ours.' In the concealment of the body of Moses the Divine Voice is represented as proclaiming: 'I do not want this to be a local man. I do not want him to be the man of a class or party. I do not want men to say that he is a Hebrew teacher, a Syrian teacher, an Egyptian teacher. I want him to belong to the *world*—in the length of it, in the breadth of it. I would have him claimed by no nation; I would have him associated with no soil; I would have him known as the property of Man.'

And has not Moses fulfilled that destiny! Has the first voice of Sinai ever lost its cosmopolitan ring! Have its commands ever become merely national! 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'—is *that* national; is it not the voice to humanity! 'Thou shalt not make any graven image'—is that national; is it not the ignoring of all physical limits! 'Honour thy father and thy mother'—is that national; are not the ties of family universal! 'Thou shalt not kill'—is that national; is not life *everywhere* dear! 'Thou shalt not steal'—is that national; are not possessions everywhere precious! 'Thou shalt not bear false witness'—is that national; have not all lands sought the secret of truth!

Even the command to keep a day of rest, seemingly the most local of all the Decalogue precepts, is based upon no national observance —no Jewish holiday, no patriotic anniversary, no commemoration of a people's triumph. It is based upon the fact of creation, on the constitution of Nature itself, on that design of the world which makes all things one, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.' Such universalism is grand—in the old world it is unique. It can only belong to a race which has in it the consciousness and the conscience of humanity—a race which feels within its veins not merely its native blood, but the blood of all ages and the heart of all climes. Such a race had a *right* to its Messianic aspirations.

REVEAL to me, O Lord, that fire which burns and yet does not consume—the fire of love! My life will be consumed *without* the burning of that fire. It is want of enthusiasm that kills me, wears me away. My soul dies through lack of burning. I never really live unless I catch fire. The danger of my bush is not its heat, but its wilderness. It is the commonplace

that consumes me. I am never so weary as when I am aimless, never so fatigued as when I have nothing to do. Set fire to my heart, O Lord! Kindle me into the love of humanity! Inflame me with the passion to make my brother glad! Give me a telepathic sense of others' pain! Let me feel the sorrows of those to whom Egypt is a foreign land—who are not adapted to their life's environment! Lay on my heart the burden of the bondsman, the troubles of the toiler, the weights of the weary! Help me to live for a day, for an hour, yea, even for a moment, in the experience of human struggle! Call me up to the burning bush where Thou dwellest, where Thou sufferest! Teach me that the burning bush is the Tree of Life in the midst of Thy Paradise! I speak of the fires of hell; teach me that there is a fire in heaven—a sense of sorrows not my own! Give me this Divine pain, *Thy* pain, the pain of Calvary! When I have overcome my selfish heart I shall inherit Thy Tree of Life —that burning bush of sacrifice which is the glory of Thy Garden.

CHAPTER XI

JOSHUA THE PROSAIC

THERE is a type of human character which belongs to all ages and to all nations, but which is absent from all *national* galleries. I allude to the type of humanity called prosaic. When a nation employs the hand of a painter to place on canvas the figures of the men she deems heroic, she never includes among these the *prosaic* man. She may include the man immersed in ordinary business; Confucius was such a man—and China painted Confucius. But then, Confucius was a business *director*. He was not the *subject* of commercial and municipal rules; he was the maker of these rules; that itself removes him from prosaic associations. The prosaic man is the subordinate man, the man who obeys orders. It matters very little in what sphere these orders are received. The cleaner of telescopes for the observations of a Galileo is not a whit nearer to the stars than is the carrier

of parcels for a firm of merchandise. He, too, is but a carrier of parcels; he is not the inaugurator of his own work—he is deriving his movement from the impact of others.

I have said that such a man figures in no national gallery. But he figures in the one gallery that is *not* national—the Gallery of the Bible. Here there emerges into heroic prominence that type which everywhere else has been esteemed the reverse of heroic—the man who obeys orders. We should have missed something if in this Gallery there had been no place prepared for *him,* if the sphere of subordinate duty had been the one spot where the possibility of heroism was not recognised. Hitherto, as these successive figures have passed before us, we have not found a representative of subordinate duty. All the spheres we have examined have been those of leaders or of such as *wish* to be leaders. Adam wants to rule the Garden. Abel wants an independent worship. Enoch and Noah want to change the fashion. Abraham seeks to found a state. Isaac labours to consolidate a household. Jacob aspires to establish a priesthood. Joseph dreams of a city of gold. Moses aims at universal legislation. There has been no

place as yet for the follower, the satellite, the man who obeys orders. There has been no recognition of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water—of those whose mission is not to plan, but to execute, and whose action constitutes three-fourths of the conduct of life.

But now this recognition is coming. A figure is about to appear which is to embody the desiderated idea. That figure is Joshua. He is from beginning to end the representative of the satellite, of the men who *follow*. As we pass from Moses to Joshua we feel as if we were passing from poetry to prose. Practical though Moses was, his sphere was on the height. The mountain was his native element. It was on the mountain that he had to prepare for the plain. It was the soul of a poet that led him to glorify common things; his sober practice came from his ecstatic elevation. Joshua, on the other hand, had never stood on the height, had never *required* to occupy it. He had not possessed the genius to discover the Promised Land. He was no explorer, no investigator, no Columbus. His work began where that of Columbus ended. When *he* entered on the scene *his* America had been al-

ready found. Moses was moving toward the Land of Promise. Everything had been planned; everything had been arranged. All that was needed was a patient drudge to execute the orders—a man who would be content to take the servant's place. No prophetic vision was required, no foresight, no insight. The thing wanted was rather an *absence* of these qualities—a man who would not look before him, who would not look within him, who would simply listen for the word of command, and do as he was bid. The head and the heart of the enterprise were already there; all that remained was to seek a *hand*.

Now, this place was to be filled by Joshua. More than any other figure of the Gallery he represents the working man. From first to last his duties were mechanical. He began with the post of a servant, and he ended with the post of a servant. He never at any time reaped personal credit from his achievements —not even when he was head of the army. He was always indebted to circumstances. The results he achieved were stupendous; they more directly influenced the modern world than did the life of Abraham or the prime-ministry of Joseph, for the conquest of

Canaan issued in the creed of Christendom. Yet Joshua comes not before us as a pioneer. He appears merely as an instrument. He seems to be *led* into the Promised Land. He is rather an occasion than a cause. The wreaths of victory fell not on *him*. The prize of glory eluded his grasp. He was ever merely an instrument. He is only once recorded as using his own judgment—when he made a league with Gibeon; and on that occasion he was overreached. He may be described epigrammatically as a man who made a fortune whose acquisition was ever afterwards attributed to another. He could well have reversed the words of a later countryman and said, '*I* have *laboured,* and other men have *entered into* my labours—have reaped the glory of what I have sown.'

Let me now proceed to illustrate this feature of the Portrait of Joshua. We first meet with him in the battle of Rephidim. He is still a young man; but he has been intrusted with the entire command of the forces during the engagement. One would think that this was a very responsible post, and that the man who held it was the main factor in the battle. Not thus is it represented in the Great Gallery.

Here, the real scene of battle is placed outside the physical combat altogether—on the top of a hill where Moses stands in prayer! The alternations of the battle do not come from the movements of the contending parties. They come from the variations of intensity with which the *petitions* rise. Moses is the real combatant; the prayers of Moses are the real weapons. Are the hands of Moses lifted in supplication; then Joshua is seen to triumph. Are the hands of Moses drooping wearily; then *Amalek* gains ground. Does Joshua at last achieve the victory over Amalek; it is not by might, nor power, nor skill; it is because the supplicating hands of Moses have been held up by other hands and prevented from growing weary. The battle of Rephidim is a battle of will-force—the will-force of one not engaged in the fray. That is the Picture in the Gallery. Joshua fights with Amalek on the plain, and Amalek falls back before the sword of Joshua. But the real fighting power is not on the plain, not with the sword, not in Joshua. It is up on a neighbouring mountain, where an old man stands and prays that Joshua may win. It is this will-force called *prayer* that sways battle. It is this silent thing,

this voiceless thing, this unseen and unheard thing, that is the prime mover, the real mover. It is this that nerves the arm of Israel; it is this that repels the host of Amalek. Joshua might be nowhere. He is a cypher, a mute, a pageant set on the way to hide the *real* source of power.

Do not imagine that this is an accidental trait in the delineation of the great artist. It is the most deliberate touch of his pencil. The battle of Rephidim is not merely a *preliminary* event; it is a typical event. It is a key-note, a prelude to the whole piece. In all the shifting of the scenes there is no shifting of the principle. Joshua may be transferred from the desert to the Promised Land; he may be raised from the business of a delegate into the post of a leader; he may assume the outward robe which Moses used to wear—but, place him where you will, clothe him as you will, he never ceases to be a subaltern. His work is ever that of a subordinate. Apparently a mighty conqueror, he has at no time either the kingdom, the power, or the glory. His position is that of an instrument blown by the wind into strains of harmony. He derives no credit from his own melodies. He is a pas-

sive agent in their formation. They come not *from* him; they only breathe *through* him; he is himself the product of a higher will.

He stands before the walls of Jericho. His army is equipped for battle. All is ready for the assault. Every preparation has been made to storm the city, to vindicate the military glory of the nation. The issue of the siege is not doubtful; God has promised that Israel shall possess the land. Why, then, delay! Why not give the signal to advance, and sweep like an avalanche upon the foe! So, perhaps, thinks Joshua. Not such is the will of the Almighty. The voice of God comes to him and says: 'I send you to do great deeds, but you shall go by a lowly path—by the way of the valley. Leave the battle to Me, the shaking of the walls to Me! Take you the *servant's* post, the menial's post! Walk round the city in procession, you and your followers; walk, and blow the trumpets! Once every day, for six days, shall you compass it; and on the seventh day you shall compass it many times! Make no effort to break through the fortified places! *I* will make the breach; keep you to the marching and the blowing of the trumpets! Do not ask what is the use of your work; do

not say that your talents are bound in a napkin! No man is an agent in the *history* of this world. I alone am the agent. It is I who make the breach in the walls of *every* Jericho. The most brilliant deed of man is only a signal for the moving of My hand. All are but blowers of the trumpet; all are but beaters of the drum. Why should you object to be a public revelation of that which is really a universal law!'

Again. He stands on the field of Gibeon—that bloodiest and most decisive field in the war for the conquest of Canaan. Yet, decisive as it was, it owed not its finality to Joshua. The Bible virtually says that the narrative of the battle is encumbered with legend. We will try to disentangle it from the legend. Five kings of the Amorites have combined their forces to overwhelm the little state of Gibeon. Gibeon has made a league with Israel —that is her *offence*. The five kings are afraid to attack Israel, but they will punish that small kingdom which has proclaimed itself her ally. Against such heavy odds Gibeon cannot stand. She sends up a cry of great despair. Joshua hears it. Should he allow his ally to perish for *being* an ally! His heart for-

bids it. It is true, Gibeon has obtained the alliance by false pretences; but she *has* obtained it. Joshua regards Gibeon as blind old Isaac had regarded Jacob. Gibeon, like Jacob, had obtained a promise by deceit; none the less, the promise, once given, was the will of God. It may have been wrong to make it; now that it was made, it was a part of God's universe. Joshua will confirm the blessing to Gibeon as Isaac confirmed the blessing to Jacob. He will not let her be crushed on *his* account. He will hasten to her relief; he will defend her; he will rescue her.

And so, the army of Gibeon and the army of Israel join hands against the host of the Amorites; and there is fought one of the bloodiest fights of history. It is to me one of the most interesting battles of the Bible, because it is fought, not for revenge, not for supremacy, not even for the cause of the Hebrew race, but simply and solely for motives humanitarian—for honour, for chivalry. It is fought in behalf of a foreign land, in the impulse of human generosity, in obedience to the claims of man as man. One would almost think that the principles of the universal Decalogue had begun to inoculate the people of

Israel, and that through the roar of battle and the clang of national jealousies there were discerned already the still small voice of brotherhood.

Here, then, is an occasion for romantic heroism! Joshua has come in chivalry; will not the conflict prove his personal prowess; will not his arm this day be revealed as the conquering arm! Such we expect; but such we do not find. The struggle at Gibeon is undertaken by the generosity of Joshua; but it is decided by the elements of nature. In the midst of the combat the sky is overcast and a storm gathers. From ever-deepening clouds there pours a torrent of fierce hail, which the wind bears right into the faces of the Amorites. They are disheartened; it seems as if heaven were shooting its arrows in favour of Israel. By and by the darkness becomes dense. The expression of the narrative is, 'The sun became silent.' It is not, 'The sun stood still,' as our translation has it. The silence of light is a metaphor not for continuous shining, but for ceasing to shine. We read of the morning stars 'singing together'; this means that they were shining together. What the Amorites see at Gibeon is not a prolonged

day, but a premature night. And that night is their destruction. Beyond all things they are afraid of darkness. Their God is the sunshine. This premature sunset at Gibeon makes them feel that God has averted His countenance; He is against their enterprise, on the side of their enemies.[1] Vain is it to strive, vain is it to dare! Panic seizes them—the panic of believing that God has hid His face. They faint, they totter, they break into fragments. Unprepared for work in the night, they have no torches—they cannot fly. But Israel has torches, for *her* God rules by *night* as well as by day. And so, Israel presses forward, and the Amorites fall thick and fast. It is a crushing defeat and a deadly carnage. But *again* is Joshua only a follower of the stream. Here, as at Rephidim, here, as at Jericho, his part has been that of a spectator. He has not been a leader; he has been a satellite. He has derived his power from influences not his own—from the wind, from the hail, from the darkness. The possession of genius has been denied him; the gift of originality has been denied him; his one merit has been that

[1] I understand Joshua x. 12 to mean that Joshua saw the sky overclouding and uttered a prayer for a premature darkness so that it might confound the Amorites.

he has been content to take the lower room.

I wonder if any one realises what a merit that really is. I have said that the *national* galleries do not. There are three classes of men in this world—the men in *advance* of their time, the men *up* to their time, and the men *following* their time. The first are decidedly original; they have their place in *every* gallery. The second are *trying* to be original; and they have their place in *many* galleries. The third have no originality; they wait to obey orders; and they have a place in *no* gallery—save in that of the Bible. But I think, in preparing a place for this third class, the Bible Gallery has shown a superior discernment. For, have you considered the merit of a man like Joshua! Have you considered the extreme difficulty of doing exclusively the work of routine! That work, as I have said, comprehends three-fourths of the business of life. It is the most necessary work in the world. Without it, human society would be dissolved in a single year. But, because it is the most *common* work, do we imagine it is therefore the easiest! To my mind, the marvels of humanity are not the men on the

mount, but the men perpetually on the plain. I think Moses a greater man than Joshua; but I can *account* for Moses better than I can account for Joshua. I can understand why a man of high poetic instinct and strong aspirings after glory should occasionally do a commonplace thing well. But that a man whose feet have never touched the hills, that a man whose eye has never seen the heights, should repeat from day to day the habitual task and make no mistake therein—this is, to me, the miracle of miracles, this is the wonder of the world!

We often express surprise that one who has for years been employed in routine work should, at the eleventh hour, make a glaring mistake. Our surprise is founded on the notion that the longer we pursue the same mechanical routine, the better we shall perform it. I believe it to be just the reverse. I have been told by preachers who were compelled to speak from memory, that they nowhere felt in such danger of tripping as in the Lord's prayer. Why so? Simply because they knew it so mechanically. Its words had become to them a matter of routine; they were so familiar that they had ceased to waken self-re-

flection. It is precisely the same with the reiteration of every process which is merely physical. Tell Joshua to take, each day, a certain number of steps round Jericho, tell him to blow, each day, a certain number of blasts in front of the city, and it is probable his steps will *decrease* in accuracy and his blasts *diminish* in regularity. And if, in spite of this probability, Joshua obeys to the letter, if, in spite of prognostics to the contrary, he keeps the order of the march and of the signals, ought we not to conclude that Joshua is a worthy man—a man worthy of all reverence, deserving of all esteem, demanding a permanent place in the gallery of human souls!

The truth is, there is a kind of service that we have not sufficiently appreciated—the service given by unpoetic souls. The popular view is that unpoetic souls are better able to be drudges *by reason of* their want of poetry. We say, 'Martha is a matter-of-fact woman; it is *natural* to her to have much serving.' It is not; it is *un*natural to her; and it is so precisely because she *is* a matter-of-fact woman. The service of Martha is a sacrifice

to duty. She has been obliged to put duty in the place of poetic impulse. She is working under privation—the want of poetry. She is in the position of one of the blind who make baskets; she would make them better with sight, but she must do the best she can with her existing faculties; and she deserves credit for doing so well in such adverse circumstances. Now, remember that the large majority are in Martha's position. The mass of mankind have no illuminative vision. Is it not a great credit to them that they do their work without it! Does it not show that there is a strong sacrificial power on the common plane of humanity, when the men who cannot stand on Mount Nebo nor see the burning bush in the wilderness are yet able, from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, to go the prescribed round and perform the allotted task!

And is it not well that this merit should be acknowledged! If other galleries have *neglected* to acknowledge it, is it not well that the old Hebrew Bible has repaired the omission! Moses would have had his place in *any* gallery; Joshua has his place *only here.* I plead the claims of Joshua! I defend the selec-

tion which has given him a recognition in the records of the human race! I am glad he has received a niche in the temple of fame, a corner amid the representative men of the world! Let him keep that corner—let the class which he represents keep it! Let the men who toil in the vineyard for the pay of each hour receive a tribute *beyond* the hour—the tribute of human admiration for work done without the support of an adequate motive and under the pressure of commonplace routine! That will be our best monument to the memory of Joshua!

LORD, there are times when I get work to do whose good I cannot see! Sometimes, before the walls of Jericho, there is put into my hand a trumpet when I think it should be a sword! Sometimes I am sent a long circuitous march when I expect to be retained for the assault! These moments are very hard to me. It is not the *work* that is hard; it is the want of vision. It is easy enough to blow the trumpet; it is a light thing to walk round the city. The hard thing is to see the *good* of it, to believe that I am not shunted from the race. Help me at

such moments, O Lord, to say, 'One step enough for me'! When the distant scene is denied me, when the gloom encircles me, when the things of to-morrow are veiled from me, help me to say, 'One step enough for me'! When the voice of Moses is heard no more on the hill, when the Song of Miriam has been drowned by the roaring wind, when the fire of the bush has been hid by intervening trees, help me to say, 'One step enough for me'! Let the one step be the ordered step, the commanded step! Let me not ask how the sound of my trumpet can aid the fall of Jericho! Let me not ask why I am to go round about when there is a short and easy way! If I am not to be Moses, let me be Joshua; if I am not to see the *whole,* let me see nothing—let me leave all to *Thee!* I would have no half-vision, O my Father, for half-vision is a misleading thing. Either let me see the Promised Land with Moses, or with Joshua let me be led blindfold by *Thee!* When I see not the Promised Land, let me feel the Promised *Hand!* When I behold not Thine Ararat, let me touch Thine *Arm!* When I view not Thy Glory, let me have Thy *Guidance!* When there is no dove from heaven, let there be a

duty of the hour! When I have lost sight of Thy coming, let me strain the ear for Thy command! I shall not weep the want of the wing if only I can say, 'One step enough for me'!

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